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ACCOUNTING FOR THE "SOCIAL" IN STATE SOCIALIST ROMANIA, 1960s–1980s: CONTEXTS AND GENEALOGIES

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I hereby declare that this dissertation contains no materials accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions and no materials previously written and/or published by another person unless otherwise noted.

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Abstract

This dissertation reconstructs the contexts and genealogies of scientific thought on the "social" in state socialist Romania in the 1960s–1980s. New ideas and practices of observing, analyzing, and intervening in the social realities of socialist society emerged beginning in the early 1960s, originally in debates over the canonical disciplines of Marxist-Leninist social science (historical materialism, scientific socialism, and Marxist sociology). These were further developed by Marxist revisionist and humanist Marxist thought on the relationship between individuals and society in socialism, which decentered the collectivist ethos characteristic of "dogmatic" Marxism-Leninist philosophy for most of the 1950s.

Made possible by the Marxist humanist breakthrough of the early 1960s, Marxist-Leninist sociology was subsequently established as a separate discipline at the Academy of Social and Political Sciences and at the University of Bucharest. Institutional and intellectual constraints and possibilities were differently configured in these two contexts. For the case of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences, the dissertation emphasizes the dynamic between local, transnational, and global frameworks of knowledge production, and the role of Eastern bloc cooperation in the field of sociology in particular. In the Romanian context, the interplay between local and transnational frames of reference resulted in studies of the social structure of socialist society that sought to rework concepts of everyday Marxism-Leninism—as formulated in party pronouncements and translated into the planning of knowledge production in the social sciences. The most notable among these was the concept of "social homogenization." Developed since the second half of the 1960s, through to the qualitative turn of the late 1970s, and into the 1980s, its history illustrates the interplay between legitimization and criticism characteristic of Marxist-Leninist sociology.

Several student cohorts were trained at the University of Bucharest between 1965, when the sociology department was first established, through to 1977, when the department was disbanded, and in a very restricted sense until the end of the 1980s. As taught at the university, sociology drew on Marxist, interwar, and Western sociological sources. This idiosyncratic intellectual blend underpinned large-scale empirical research on the two main sociological issues of social development (especially in relation to

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

industrialization and urbanization) and scientific management (in relation to social planning). By outlining the context of sociology as practiced at the university alongside oral history accounts by sociology students trained at the time, generational, intellectual, and existential fault lines come to the fore beneath a commonly shared understanding of sociology as an apolitical science of "social engineering" with roots in the interwar period.

The second part of the dissertation proposes a "reverse genealogy" of three themes which became part of the imaginary of postsocialist intellectual thought on the social: participation, equality, and welfare. It explores how the three intellectual, institutional, and generational contexts identified in the first part of the dissertation played out in sociological research on mass culture, women's emancipation, and the quality of life in the 1960s–80s.

First, the reverse genealogical method allows to map a fuller range of strands of intellectual thought than has been made possible by the strong anti-communist turn of the 1990s. Most notably among them is the critical Marxist revisionist thought on the socialist system developed into the late 1980s, which drew on insight from mass culture and mass communications research. Second, the method of reverse genealogy recovers for the history of intellectual thought strands which have been not just abruptly abandoned, but also forgotten to the point of no longer being recognized as intellectual thought in the postsocialist period to begin with. Such is the 1970s literature on women's emancipation, which focused on issues of economic inequality, double burden, and sexism. Finally, the method of reverse genealogy showcases unacknowledged continuities in terms of scientific practice and ideas about the social between the state socialist and postsocialist periods. The case of quality of life research shows how technical instruments repurposed in the 1990s as tools of transition were originally adapted from Western empirical research for an ambiguous agenda that sought both to "de-politicize" the issue of welfare and to offer tools for managing people's subjective experience of quality of life.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Table of contents

PART I: GENEALOGIES

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Introduction

In this dissertation, I reconstruct the contexts and genealogies of scientific thought on the "social" in state socialist Romania, from the early 1960s to the end of the 1980s, and work towards an intellectual history of social thought in the postsocialist period. To introduce this project, I first elaborate on the analytical use of the concept of "the social" for the study of state socialism. Second, I locate my work within the historiography of social sciences after the Second World War in East Central Europe, and discuss how the Romanian case compares against existing regional and local accounts on the role of revisionist Marxist thought in the period of de-Stalinization; the project of a specifically socialist sociology; and the intellectual and professional experiences of the generation of sociologists trained under state socialism. Third, I elaborate on the issue of method in the history of social sciences, and specifically the ways in which the investigation of ideas about the social in state socialism can inform an intellectual history of the postsocialist period, an approach which I define as "reverse genealogy." This project has its own intellectual genealogy, which I reconstruct in the last part of the introduction in acknowledgement of the constraints, inspiration, and support which molded it along the way.

1. *Towards a history of the "social" in state socialism*

I start with a working definition of the "social" as the result of the epistemic, discursive, and political contestation of what constitutes social reality. Throughout the period I am analyzing, social reality was variously defined as the interplay between social existence and social consciousness, as an aggregate of social classes, strata, or groups, or as the totality of social relations. These definitions resulted from fairly distinct configurations

of scientific ideas and practices, which I identify as Marxism humanism, Marxist-Leninist sociology, and social engineering. However, they should not be understood in isolation of each other. On the contrary, social scientists mutually recognized each other's definitions as distinct approaches to the study of social reality, grounded in generational, institutional, epistemic, and political differences. It is through this mutual recognition of difference, I argue, through the fundamental agreement that the social is contestable and not just a given, that the social re-emerged as a domain of intellectual thought, scientific research, and political practice in state socialism.

My definition is especially informed by recent criticism of the homogenizing uses of the social in accounts of modernity in the case of Germany and the Soviet Union. The term, originally inspired by Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition*, was developed beginning in the second half of the 1970s in debates about the "rise of the social" and governmentality in Western Europe and the United States. Writing about the rise of the social in the forward to Jacques Donzelot's *The Policing of Families* in 1977, Gilles Deleuze remarked that the social "clearly is not a question of the adjective that qualifies the set of phenomena which sociology deals with." "*The* social," Deleuze argued, "refers to a *particular sector* in which quite diverse problems and special cases can be grouped together, a sector comprising specific institutions and an entire body of qualified personnel."[1] The "dissolution of the family," one such problem which was at the core of Donzelot's investigation, pointed to the rise of the social as a realm distinct from the juridical and the economic in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The social emerged as a new hybrid form of the public and the private, in which the state intervened and from which the state withdrew in novel ways (what Foucault called

[1] Gilles Deleuze, "Forward: The Rise of the Social," in Jaques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), ix.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

modes of governmentality). Such were the instruments developed for what Nikolas Rose called the "labor of documentation" on issues such as poverty, illness, or crime, among others: "Statistics, censuses, surveys, and a new genre of explorations of the lives of the poor attempted to render moral events knowable and calculable."[2] As a consequence of these changes, Rose argued, the moral order came to be understood no longer with reference to external ethical and theological principles, but as a reality with its own characteristics, laws, and regularities.

The idea of the "invention of the social" had profound implications for the understanding of modernity. As Donzelot asked in the 1979 preface to the English translation of his book, "How did we pass from a usage of 'the social' understood as the problem of poverty, the problem of others, to its current definition in terms of a general solidarity and production of a lifestyle; what enabled it to be made into a showcase of development, whose defense comes before all else, something to be offered to the world at whatever cost?"[3] He gave one answer to these questions in his 1984 *The invention of the social: Essay on the decline of political passions*, pointing that the rise of the social corresponded to the need to render governable a society which had decided to lead itself democratically but was torn by bitter political debate in the wake of the 1848 revolution.[4]

By the time his book was published, Jean Baudrillard had already proclaimed "the end of the social." Consecrated by the social sciences as "obvious" and "ageless," he argued, the social was instead a process neither clear nor unequivocal. He hypothesized that the social had 1) either never existed; 2) really existed, but had come to invest

[2] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 113
[3] Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, xxvii.
[4] Jaques Donzelot, *L'invention du social: Essai sur le déclin des passions politiques* (Paris: Fayard, 1984).

everything and be imposed everywhere; 3) or the social truly existed as a "coherent space" and "reality principle" but had ceased to do so; 4) possibly by having imploded "before giving out its secret."[5] As remarked by Rose, Baudrillard's diagnosis "can serve to remind us that 'the social' is not an inevitable horizon for our thought or our political judgement […]. It does not refer to an inescapable fact about human beings—that they are social creatures—but to a way in which human intellectual, political, and moral authorities, within a limited geographical territory, thought about and acted upon their collective experience."[6]

This understanding of the social, developed in analyses of modernity devoted to Western Europe and the United States such as Rose's, has also been integrated in recent historiography on Germany from the Wilhelmine through to the Nazi period, and in the historiography of the Soviet Union. Yet as argued by Dennis Sweeney in the case of the former, scholarship has generally assumed that "the social and social pedagogies were part of a unitary process and largely indifferent to party political and ideological formulations."[7] Instead, on the example of the *Weltanschauungskrieg* over the issue of social welfare in Weimar Germany, Sweeney pointed to the contestation of the very shape of the social by state and non-state actors, from different political positions, and resulting in different constellations of welfare.[8]

It is this insight that I integrate in my definition of the social as a domain of political contestation. The debates over the canon of Marxist-Leninist social science at the beginning of the 1960s set up a framework for dialogue about the social with keen

[5] Jean Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities… or The End of the Social and Other Essays* (New York: Semiotexte, 1983), 65–91.
[6] Rose, *Powers of Freedom*, 101.
[7] Dennis Sweeney, "Reconsidering the Modernity Paradigm: Reform Movements, the Social, and the State in Wilhelmine Germany," *Social History* 31, no. 4 (2006): 409
[8] Dennis Sweeney, "'Modernity' and the Making of Social Order in Twentieth-Century Europe," *Contemporary European History* 23, no. 2 (2014): 209–224.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

awareness for the political implications of seemingly pedantic arguments. We have largely lost fluency in the language that negotiated the boundaries between historical materialism, scientific socialism, Marxist-Leninist sociology, and social engineering, the latter often referred by sociologists trained under state socialism simply as "sociology." In writing this dissertation I maintain, however, that the value of looking back on these arguments is in fact in developing tools and the sensitivity to decode political debate in its many forms. By recovering the rationality of arguments that had long been forgotten, at times by the actors themselves, this a plea for expanding the horizon of engaged thinking about the social beyond available modes of contestation in the present as well.

Criticizing the "fixed ideas" underpinning Stephen Kotkin's identification of socialist modernity with Bolshevism, particularly its anti-individualism, Anna Krylova has also argued that the register of discourses or "cultural forms" addressing the relationship between individual and the social in non-market societies was in fact broader than assumed. The emergence of a new, post-Bolshevik language already in the second half of the 1930s, she argued, "enabled a public conversation that carried meanings of the 'individual' and its relationship to the 'social' away from the Bolshevik collectivist agenda which aimed at eliminating the very difference between the two."[9] Instead, the focus shifted from merging to connecting individual goals and the social good, a task also taken up in various guises by the social scientists whose work I analyze in my dissertation.

The issue appears most clearly in the Marxist humanist literature which reframes the relationship between individual and society in the 1970s (chapter one), but also in the

[9] Anna Krylova, "Soviet Modernity: Stephen Kotkin and the Bolshevik Predicament," *Contemporary European History* 23, no. 2 (2014): 171.

work of Marxist-Leninist sociologists debating the relationship between social homogenization and social differentiation and questioning the use of concepts such as class, social strata, or social groups (chapter two). Finally, "social engineering" was also concerned with the experience of individuals moving from a rural to an urban context, for instance, and later with ways to render the social quantifiable, via indicators able to aggregate the complexity of individual social experiences, both objective and subjective, for the purposes of social planning (chapter three).

To conclude this section, I would like to specifically reflect on the analytical potential for the study of state socialism of the social understood as contested political domain. My research illustrates at least three possible uses of the social for a critical approach to intellectual thought and scientific practice in the 1960s–80s. Recent literature on state socialism in the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc has been defiant against the simplifications of the so-called "totalitarian paradigm," and the supposed dichotomy between society and state in particular. Adding to this literature, the investigation of ideas about the social aims to go beyond the totalitarian-revisionist framing of state socialism. Instead, it captures exactly the interplay at any given time between how society was conceived and what social scientists saw as the possibilities and tools of intervention in society by the party and the state. The configuration of this interplay between theory and practice depended on the observer's political and intellectual background, but not always in predictable ways. This opens for analysis case studies that do not fit neatly with either the totalitarian or the revisionist paradigms.

In the context of Romania, for example, I document the case of Tudor Bugnariu, member of the illegal Communist Party in the interwar period, who collaborated on a proposal for the re-institutionalization of sociology in the first half of the 1960s with Traian Herseni, the most prominent member of the interwar Gusti School who had

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

become an ideologue for the Iron Guard. It was on the issue of expertise that the interests of the two met and an alliance was temporarily made possible. Yet Bugnariu, who sought to reform socialism starting with the anti-intellectualist and non-democratic governance of science, was worried not so much about Herseni's political background. Herseni had served his time in prison at the beginning of the 1950s and had educated himself in Marxism-Leninism. Bugnariu was worried about his supposedly apolitical social engineering ambitions, which built on the interwar vision of a totalizing science of the social. In spite of his democratic commitments, he warned that the social scientist should not encroach on the party's decision-making prerogatives, and indeed their project ultimately failed.

The focus on the social as a domain of contestation also puts into perspective alternative discourses that organized the collective imaginary of state socialism, most notably decentering the nation. In the case of Romania in particular, the spectacular development of national communism in the 1970s and 1980s has obscured alternative strands of intellectual thought. Its enviable currency in cultural debates at the time led Katherine Verdery to argue that in effect even critical engagement with national ideology under state socialism only served to consolidate its hegemonic position under conditions of competition for scarce resources.[10] Yet ideas about the social tell a different story of socialist modernity in Romania, one in which ideals of democratic participation, equality, and solidarity, even if stifled by authoritarian, centralist, or personalistic leadership, move center stage.

Finally, investigations of the elaboration of the social as a field of research and political debate can also inform analyses of state socialism in more direct ways. In the second

[10] Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceauşescu's Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

half of the 1960s and the 1970s, social scientists documented not just the failures, but also the unintended consequences of state policies, especially with regard to reproducing or creating new forms of social inequality. These sources require careful decoding, but nevertheless provide a wealth of empirical evidence; moreover, as self-reflective critiques from within the system, they testify to the in-built critical potential of Marxist-Leninist ideology.

I analyze the latter in the first chapter of the dissertation, in which I argue that the emergence in the early 1960s of new ideas and practices of observing, analyzing, and intervening in the social realities of socialist society were initially made possible by the development of revisionist Marxist and Marxist humanist thought. This led to the theoretical reworking, in the 1970s, of the relationship between individual and society in socialism, and to decentering the collectivist ethos characteristic of Stalinist Marxism-Leninist philosophy for most of the 1950s. The fact that this has so far remained undocumented raises further questions about the postsocialist period and the reluctance of local historiography to take ideology seriously. Indeed, judged in a regional context, Romania is often singled out for its lack of revisionist Marxist thought. This is invoked in normative and self-deprecating accounts by social scientists who were themselves active at the time, and plays into the memory politics of the postsocialist period in ways which deserve further careful consideration.

2. Social sciences in the Eastern bloc and the case of Romania

To locate my research in the broader historiography of social sciences and humanities in the postwar period, I note the emergence in the past decade of the diverse field of

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

"Cold War social science."[11] Cold War social science has been broadly described in terms of the (often covert) patronage by military and by government agencies; the postwar quantitative turn; the self-fashioned "scientific objectivity"; and the penchant for grand theory.[12] The field gathers multiple accounts of disciplines, intellectual pursuits, and research projects, yet in spite of this thematic diversity, its geography has remained overwhelmingly North American and Western European. This has been problematized in accounts of the history of social sciences on the European semi-periphery which complicate our understanding of postwar epistemological change not by simply reminding us that there was a parallel story unfolding under state socialism, but by reflecting on how this story was integrated, or why it was not, into a broader narrative of global transformation.[13] In what follows, I proceed chronologically through the challenges that this new historiography puts forward, and discuss my own contribution to the growing literature on postwar social sciences in East Central Europe.

To begin with, "Sovietization" was not a straightforward or standardized process. The point has been extensively labored in the recent historiography on state socialism in East Central Europe, which successfully challenged the view of a homogenous imposition from the outside of a monolithic political, economic, and cultural model on passive actors across the Eastern bloc after 1948. Instead, processes of negotiation,

[11] See David C. Engerman, "Science in the Cold War," *Isis* 101, no. 2 (2010): 393–400; Mark Solovey, "Cold War Social Science: Specter, Reality, or Useful Concept?," in Mark Solovey and Hamilton Cravens, eds., *Cold War Social Science: Knowledge Production, Liberal Democracy, and Human Nature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 1–22; and for a critical mapping of the field, Christian Dayé, "Visions of a Field: Recent Developments in Studies of Social Science and Humanities," *Science, Technology, and Human Values* 39 (2014): 877–91.
[12] Theodore M. Porter, "Positioning Social Science in Cold War America," in Solovey and Cravens, eds., *Cold War Social Science*, ix–xv.
[13] See the journal edited issues introduced by Ivan Boldyrev and Olessia Kirtchik, "On (Im)permeabilities: Social and Human Sciences on Both Sides of the 'Iron Curtain,'" *History of the Human Sciences* 29, nos. 4–5 (2016): 2–12; Matthias Duller and Mikoł Pawlak, "Varieties of Sociology under State Socialism," *Stan Rzeczy*, no. 2 (2017): 7–18; and the volume Adela Hîncu and Victor Karady, eds., *Social Sciences in the "Other Europe" after 1945* (Budapest: Pasts, Inc. Center for Historical Studies, 2018).

adaptation, and compromise are emphasized, leading to the questioning of the very premise of unilateral transferred implied by the term Sovietization itself.[14] Contributing to this literature, accounts of the "Sovietization" of social sciences also show that epistemological change did not always align with political and social transformations. They point to unacknowledged continuities between the interwar and the postwar periods; to the embeddedness of local epistemic changes in broader, transnational histories of knowledge production; and to the unpredictable consequences of epistemic claims under shifting ideological and institutional conditions.

To this strand of literature the first chapter of my dissertation adds the story of de-Stalinization—that is, of the configuration of intellectual thought on the social produced by Marxist-Leninist social scientists in critical negotiation of their own epistemic and political commitments in the 1950s. In doing so, it also formulates an important agenda for future study in the context of Romania. Many of the participants engaged in the debates over Marxist sociology in the early 1960s, who were generally professors of historical materialism and scientific socialism in the main university centers across the country, were Jewish. The idea of the supposed "Jewish origin" of the Romanian Communist Party, or at the very least the perception that Jewish members were overrepresented in the party ranks in the immediate postwar period, has been widely mobilized in anti-Semitic public discourse after 1989.[15] Against this pervasive trope, in the first chapter of my dissertation I reconstruct the personal biographies of the

[14] A. E. Rees, "Introduction: The Sovietization of Eastern Europe," in Balázs Apor, Péter Apor, and E. A. Rees, eds., *The Sovietization of Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on the Postwar Period* (Washington: New Academia Publishing, 2008), 1–27; John Connelly, *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1945–1956* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and for a comprehensive literature review, Patryk Babiracki, "Interfacing the Soviet Bloc: Recent Literature and New Paradigms," *Ab Imperio,* no. 4 (2011): 376–407.

[15] The broader context is mapped in Michael Shafir, "The Nature of Postcommunist Antisemitism in East Central Europe: Ideology's Backdoor Return," *Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism* 1, no. 2 (2018): 33–61.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

participants at the debate for two reasons. First, these biographies are scattered across literature rarely accessible in English, which moreover spans the ideological spectrum in ways oftentimes difficult to navigate. Second, these biographies testify to the complexity of Romania's participation in the Holocaust in its present-day and war-administered territories, which is often conveniently manipulated in accounts trivializing, obscuring, denying, or shifting blame for the faith of hundreds of thousands of Jews who lost their lives in pogroms, deportations, and organized extermination during the Second World War in these territories.[16] These are preconditions for any future thoughtful and systematic analysis of the relative importance of Jewish identity in the political, intellectual, and existential choices of the postwar intelligentsia, of the nature and consequences of the under-investigated anti-Semitic policies of the Romanian Communist Party, and of the re-articulation of Jewish identities in response to the national communism of the 1970s and 1980s.

Moving into the 1960s and 1970s, throughout the Eastern bloc this period saw the spectacular re-emergence of social sciences banned as so-called "bourgeois pseudo-sciences" after 1948, and sociology in particular. Recent historiography on the processes of re-institutionalization, circulation of knowledge, and epistemic change in this period has been concerned especially with overcoming the pervasive emplotment of the history of social sciences under state socialism in terms of autonomy or subservience. Instead, it is pointing to the integration of sociology, psychology, demography, management, and other social sciences as technologies of the state across the East-West divide. Moreover, social scientists in East Central Europe are shown to

[16] Randolph Braham, *Romanian Nationalists and the Holocaust: The Political Exploitation of Unfounded Rescue Accounts* (New York: Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, 1998); Michael Shafir, "Unacademic Academics: Holocaust Deniers and Trivializers in Post-Communist Romania," *The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 42, no. 6 (2014): 942–64.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

have been keenly aware of the unequal distribution of epistemic power and resources along a capitalist-socialist divide, especially following the so-called "opening towards the West." Sociologists, in particular, registered the increased opportunities and obligations for cooperation in the Eastern bloc around the project of a "socialist sociology," while seeing their work impacted by the changing weight of sociology within the field of social sciences at the national level.

Made possible by the revisionist Marxist breakthrough of the early 1960s, Marxist-Leninist sociology in Romania was established as a separate discipline at the Academy of Social and Political Sciences and at the University of Bucharest. Institutional and intellectual constraints and possibilities were differently configured in these two contexts. For the case of the Academy, I emphasize the dynamic between local, transnational, and global frameworks of knowledge production, and the role of Eastern bloc cooperation in the field of sociology in particular. In the Romanian context, the latter resulted in studies of the social structure of socialist society that reworked concepts of everyday Marxism-Leninism such as "social homogenization." Taken to illustrate the worst excesses of the Ceaușescu regime in terms of systematization and minority policies in the 1980s, social homogenization was nevertheless complexly debated in the 1970s among proponents of class-based or social stratification models of society, as I detail in the second chapter of the dissertation.

Asking if there ever was a "communist psychiatry," Sarah Marks and Mat Savelli concluded that "there were multiple psychiatries practiced across the period and the region,"[17] entangled through the complex circulation of knowledge and practices on both sides of the Iron Curtain. The same could easily be said of "socialist sociologies,"

[17] Sarah Marks and Mat Savelli, "Communist Europe and Transnational Psychiatry," in Sarah Marks and Mat Savelli, eds., *Psychiatry in Communist* Europe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 19.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

yet I also argue that the project of a "socialist sociology," whether realized or not, did matter for sociologists, at least until the end of the 1970s. Marxist-Leninist sociologists took ideology seriously, and so should we. They were keenly aware of the political content of social research and theory and of their own role in simultaneously legitimizing and criticizing the socialist system. This contradiction came to the fore most powerfully and was reproduced in transnational encounters, whether they were collaborative research projects in the Eastern bloc in which sociologists had to represent Romania's self-image of independence, or IREX scholarships to the United States which put into perspective the affinities between the radical American sociology of the 1960s and the stifled critical vocation of sociology in state socialism. By the end of the 1970s, however, as resources plummeted, the already fragile balance between legitimation and criticism became difficult to sustain. The early 1980s saw a clear epistemic break with the revisionist Marxist thought of the previous two decades.

This brings me to the historiography of the late socialist and postsocialist periods. Recent literature has shown the extent to which the existing historiography of social science disciplines in East Central Europe has been entangled with the postsocialist work of restructuring the canons, elites, and epistemic aspirations of various disciplines. Many of the resulting histories have been compiled by self-identified members of the disciplines themselves; assumed the existence of relatively strict boundaries between disciplines; and have considered the respective national contexts as the natural frame of reference. Moreover, social sciences in East Central Europe have often re-embarked on a mission to "catch up with the West," which meant that little reflection was spared for the state socialist period and for the continuities between late socialism and post-socialism. This evaluation is also true of the history of sociology in Romania.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

When I started this project, the history of postwar Romanian sociology was recognizably the result of attempts to re-establish the discipline and solve its perceived "crisis of identity" after 1989. In general, the initial impulse of the sociological community was to "recover and evoke"[18] the interwar tradition, especially the work of Dimitrie Gusti, deemed the "father of Romanian sociology," and that of his disciples, members of the so-called Bucharest Sociological School. Re-establishing the continuity with the interwar tradition was framed as a moral imperative to "rediscover the intellectual origins of our scientific and professional community."[19] Paradoxically, this was both a reparatory gesture couched in vehement anti-communist rhetoric and a largely un-problematized take-over of the "hagiographic" historiographical strand on the interwar period produced under state socialism. While rejecting communism as an oppressive ideology that hindered "objective" social science, histories of sociology written after 1989 largely left the national in "national communism" untouched.

A typical history of sociology published in 1998 identified 1948, the year the discipline had been "excommunicated" as a "bourgeois pseudo-science" as the moment of rupture with the interwar tradition; described its re-institutionalization in 1965, piecemeal toleration, and renewed marginalization in the second half of the 1970s as an illustration of its subordination to the changing political will of high-ranking party members; and more broadly sought to articulate the specificity of Romanian sociology, "proving that these [the Romanian ideas, theses and theories about society] are creations of the Romanian people, not 'borrowings' or take-overs from the 'universal stock.'"[20] With

[18] This was the title of a permanent section of *Sociologie Românească*, which was founded in 1990 and took up its name from the journal of sociology established by Dimitrie Gusti in 1936 and discontinued in 1946 under the communist regime.
[19] Ion Ungureanu, "Actualitatea tradiției" [The actuality of tradition], *Sociologie Românească* 1, nos. 1–2 (1990): 3.
[20] Ștefan Costea (ed.), *Istoria sociologiei românești* [The history of Romanian sociology] (Bucharest: Editura Fundației "România de Mâine", 1998), 7. For a more balanced account, though not entirely dismissive of the instrumental reconstruction of the history of sociology as "part of a larger process of

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

the exception of identifying the state socialist period as a radical rupture in the history of the discipline, the chronological enumeration of authors loosely grouped by period privileged continuity over coherence in establishing a national canon of sociology, not unlike histories that preceded it in the interwar period and under state socialism.[21]

Mounting skepticism towards the idealized image of interwar intellectual thought more generally, and the un-reflective continuities with the Bucharest Sociological School established after 1989 in particular, indirectly reconfigured the map of social sciences under state socialism. A notable example was the reconstruction of the history of anthropology, in which interwar sociologists who continued ethnographic and anthropological research after 1948 under different guises played a key role.[22] Building on the extensive research he conducted and fostered on the history of interwar sociology,[23] Zoltán Rostás, himself a sociologist trained in the second half of the 1960s,[24] challenged the "founding myth of the sociological community,"[25] the fact that the re-institutionalization of the discipline in 1965 coincided with the selective re-canonization of Dimitrie Gusti. The two, he observed, had in fact been parallel

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regaining self-consciousness" by harnessing the revolutionary power of tradition, see Maria Larionescu, *Istoria sociologiei românești* (Bucharest: Editura Universității din București, 2007).

[21] For an argument about the structural similarities between interwar and 1960s histories of Romanian sociology, see Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu in "Specificul național în sociologia românească" [The national specificity in Romanian sociology], in Al. Zub, ed., *Cultură și societate. Studii privitoare la trecutul românesc* [Culture and society: Studies of the Romanian past] (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1991), 443-456.

[22] See Vintilă Mihăilescu, "Despărțirea de Gusti. O perspectivă antropologică" [Parting with Gusti: An anthropological perspective], in Maria Larionescu, ed. *Școala sociologică de la București. Tradiție și actualitate* [The Bucharest Sociological School: Tradition and actuality] (Bucharest: Metropol, 1996): 49–65. Mihăilescu also co-edited a volume on socialist era anthropology in South-Eastern Europe, *Studying Peoples in the People's Democracies II* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2008).

[23] Rostás published several volumes of oral history interviews with former members of the Bucharest Sociological School conducted beginning in the 1980s, proposed an institutional and organizational analysis of the school, advised numerous doctoral students writing on topics related to interwar sociology, and set up the Cooperativa Gusti platform for the growing community of researchers interested in the social history and the history of sociology in the interwar period: http://www.cooperativag.ro.

[24] Zoltán Rostás, "Aventura: Preliminarii la un 'autointerviu,'" in Ion Pop and Călin Tăutişan, eds., *Echinox 50* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Şcoala Ardeleană, 2018), 274–81.

[25] Zoltán Rostás, "The Second Marginalization of the Bucharest Sociological School," *International Colloquium of Social Science ACUM* 5, no. 1 (2011): 69–80.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

processes, resulting in "a precariously institutionalized sociology with ambivalent ties to both its interwar heritage and its communist present."[26]

In spite of this re-evaluation, the hypothetical question implied in most accounts of the re-institutionalization of sociology in Socialist Romania remained: would a better integration (or continuation) of interwar sociology have avoided the marginalization of the discipline at the end of the 1970s? Thus formulated, the question stems from the assumptions of the classic sociology of intellectuals, in particular Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural fields. As applied by Katherine Verdery in her study of the emergence of national ideology in Socialist Romania,[27] it showed sociologists to have been only marginally involved in the debates over national identity monopolizing the cultural field in the 1970s and 1980s. Henri H. Stahl, the sociologist who intervened most authoritatively in the debate had indeed been trained in the interwar period, but he also happened to have been the single most sophisticated proponent of Marxism within the Bucharest Sociological School. Rather than the lone sociologist, he was the lone Marxist intellectual able to engage with the definition of the social in terms of national identity stemming from "the cultural field," and it is doubtful whether other interwar sociologists would have formulated a similar position. Based on the work of East Central European Marxist sociologists from the 1970s and 1980s, Verdery argued that it was under conditions of scarcity that the vertical competition between intellectuals and the party was doubled by the horizontal competition among intellectuals themselves. She has shown intellectuals engaged in the production of ideology, having emerged as a mechanism of upper mobility beginning in the early 1970s, to unwittingly

[26] Zoltán Rostás, "The Rehabilitation of Romanian Sociology after Stalinism," in Adela Hîncu and Victor Karady, eds., *Social Sciences in the "Other Europe" since 1945* (Budapest: Past, Inc. Center for Historical Studies, Central European University, 2018), 136.
[27] Verdery, *National Ideology*.

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reproduce the logic of national communism and contribute to the gradual domestication of Marxism-Leninism.

The most sophisticated attempt to account for the position of sociologists on the margins of the cultural debates over national identity within this theoretical framework entailed the understanding of the sociology developed under state socialism as "path dependent." Călin Cotoi argued that the establishment of sociology in the interwar period as the hegemonic discourse in the scientific construction of the nation largely pre-formatted the way in which the discipline was re-imagined under state socialism. The interwar sociologists identified themselves professionally with the technocratic, modernizing, and social engineering platform of the nation-state without calling into question the ideological underpinning of the nation building project. By critically engaging with the discipline's intellectual tradition, under state socialism sociologists maintained their professional ethos under the new banner of Marxism-Leninism, but this time around as a potential means to subvert it. Consequently, they engaged opportunistically and superficially with the hegemonic discourse, preferring as a strategy of legitimation and survival a sort of "resistance through science," producing an esoteric, almost exclusively technical body of knowledge.[28] While this explanation makes the crucial point that the difficulty to reintegrate interwar sociology was not just the result of political, but also epistemic structural constraints, it fails to account for the genuine engagement with ideology which underpinned both the formative debates at the beginning of the 1960s and the strand of Marxist-Leninist sociology which developed towards the end of the decade.

[28] Călin Cotoi, "Jottings on the History of Romanian Sociology," *Studia Sociologia* 56, no. 1 (2011): 135–49; and "Sociology and Ethnology in Romania: The Avatars of Social Sciences in Socialist Romania," in Ulf Brunnbauer, Claudia Kraft, and Martin Schulze Wessel, eds., *Sociology and Ethnography in East-Central and South-East Europe* (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2011), 133–146.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

As I document in the third chapter of this dissertation, several student cohorts were trained at the University of Bucharest between 1965, when the sociology department was first established, through to 1977, when the department was disbanded, and in a very restricted sense until the end of the 1980s. As taught at the university, sociology drew on Marxist, interwar Romanian, and contemporary Western sociological sources. This idiosyncratic intellectual blend underpinned large-scale empirical research on what were identified as the two main sociological issues under state socialism: social development (especially in relation to industrialization and urbanization) and scientific management (in relation to social planning).

By outlining the context of sociology as practiced at the university alongside oral history accounts by sociology students trained at the time, I bring to the fore the generational, intellectual, and existential fault lines beneath a commonly shared understanding of sociology as an apolitical science of "social engineering," while at the same time historicizing the supposed pervasiveness of ideology. As has been remarked by James Mark with regard to oral history accounts conducted in the post-socialist period, they document the interplay between public memories and the way in which individuals could relate their lives after 1989, focusing attention on "the range of acceptable stories available to individuals in the postsocialist period and highlighting the clashes between past experiences and new ideas of what is politically and morally appropriate."[29]

The accounts of sociologists trained in the socialist period are almost entirely silent on the Marxist epistemic and political content of the approach to the social they were trained in, with the notable exception of students who started their studies in the wake

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29 James Mark, *The Unfinished Revolution: Making Sense of the Communist Past in Central-Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), xxv

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

of 1968 and who were politically engaged. The accounts also over-emphasize the continuities of practice with the interwar period, resting on an idealized imagine of Romanian sociology with origins in the recovery of Dimitrie Gusti for the national communist canon in the 1970s. Finally, they document in detail the failure of social engineering as a project and often the failure of their own careers, which taken together represent a broad range of possibilities, from teaching and research to journalism to foreign intelligence, but on an individual level reveal a comparatively striking lack of options. By documenting the intellectual and professional trajectories of over forty students who were trained or who professed as sociologists, I aim to broaden the range of available narratives on the role of sociology in state socialist Romania in the 1970s and 1980s.

3. The "reverse genealogy" of postsocialist social thought; on method

The issue of oral history brings me to the second part of the dissertation, in which I explore similar mechanisms by which not individual life stories, but intellectual strands and research practices developed under state socialism were silenced, othered, or continued unacknowledged in the post-socialist period. We have no intellectual history of how ideas about the social played into the immediate postsocialist period in Romania, and only the beginnings of a history of intellectual thought during the "transition period" in East Central Europe.[30] Yet everywhere in the region, Romania being no exception, the issues of democratic participation, socio-economic equality, and welfare were debated from liberal, conservative-nationalist, and social democratic

[30] See Michal Kopeček and Piotr Wciślik, eds., *Thinking through Transition: Liberal Democracy, Authoritarian Pasts, and Intellectual History in East Central Europe after 1989* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2015).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

standpoints as part of the transition from planned economies and the so-called "return to Europe."

Instead of reconstructing the history of ideas about participation, equality, and welfare as they appear in the postsocialist period, I propose a reverse genealogy of these three main themes, by which I mean tracing their development in social thought and sociological research from the early 1960s to the late 1980s. Rather than moving backwards from specific normative ideas about the social, such as the fact that people should directly participate in politics, should not necessarily be economically equal, or should not expect social support from the state,[31] I build up genealogies starting in the mid-1960s, partly to test if they indeed lead to these ideas, and if so in what way; partly to recover the alternative strands of social thought obscured by the normativity of these ideas; and partly to identify possible configurations stemming from the state socialist period which an analysis of the intellectual thought on the social in the postsocialist period might otherwise miss. This allows me to identify not just continuities, but also ruptures, silences, or radical reinterpretations which would not have been immediately obvious otherwise.

In the second part of the dissertation, I explore how the three intellectual, institutional, and generational contexts identified in the first part of the dissertation played out in sociological research on mass culture, women's emancipation, and the quality of life. This is not meant to be exhaustive, and indeed research on youth, scientific management, or science studies could provide further genealogies of the social under state socialism. The three case studies I analyze have their own internal logic and illustrate the flexible configurations in which the three approaches to the social aligned,

[31] For an example, see Ioan Mihăilescu, "Stereotipuri în România posttotalitară" [Stereotypes in post-totalitarian Romania]. Sociologie Românească 3, no. 1 (1992): 37.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

coexisted, or defined themselves in opposition to each other. All three accounts are broadly speaking chronological, and seen in relation to one another show certain regularities, with the 1980s emerging clearly as a period of profound intellectual change. They also complicate the analysis in the first part of the dissertation by showing how interactions among sociologists of different theoretical and methodological persuasions built back into their original contexts, the paradigms of revisionist Marxism, Marxist-Leninist sociology, and social engineering, thus showing the extent to which they were, in fact, intertwined.

As my work illustrates, reverse genealogy as a method of historical research can serve several aims. First, it allows to map a fuller range of strands of intellectual thought than has been made possible by the strong anti-communist turn of the 1990s. Most notably among them is the Marxist revisionist thought on the socialist system developed into the late 1980s by the sociologist Pavel Câmpeanu. As I show in chapter four, mass culture and mass communications research had articulated the issue of participation beginning in the 1960s in the tradition of interwar militant sociology, from a structural-functionalist perspective, or by using a systems' approach. A proponent of the latter, Câmpeanu developed a Marxist critique of Stalinism drawing on insight from his research at the Center for Studies and Polls of the Romanian Radio and Television, which revealed the inability of the socialist system to nurture genuine individual participation at mass culture. In the immediate post-socialist period, his critical Marxist standpoint and "third way" political thinking were entirely decoupled from his professional identity as a sociologist of mass communications, as he became a member of the main civil society organization established in Romania in the wake of the 1989 revolution.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

The method of reverse genealogy also recovers strands of intellectual thought which have been not just abruptly abandoned, but also forgotten or othered to the point of no longer being recognizable, in the postsocialist period, as intellectual thought to begin with. The remarkable articulation and institutionalization of liberal feminist thought and gender studies in the postsocialist period also meant that a range of approaches to the socioeconomic condition of women developed under state socialism was discontinued. Such was the literature on women's emancipation published especially in the 1970s, which is often designated in the existing historiography as "propaganda"—that is, self-congratulatory of the communist regime's supposed achievements in terms of women's equality. Yet beyond the element of legitimization, much of the literature I uncover in chapter five is also intensely invested in criticizing the inequalities reproduced or created under state socialism, most notably with regard to the "feminization of agriculture," the condition of double/triple labor, or the reluctance of Marxist-Leninist ideology to engage with feminist discourse and the concept of sexism in particular.

Finally, the method of reverse genealogy showcases unacknowledged continuities in terms of scientific practice and ideas about the social between the state socialist and postsocialist periods. This is the case of quality of life research, in which technical instruments repurposed in the 1990s as tools of transition were originally adapted from 1970s Western empirical research for an ambiguous agenda that sought both to "de-politicize" the issue of welfare and to offer tools for managing people's subjective experience of quality of life. By situating the approach to welfare underpinning quality of life research back in the context of the futurological and Marxist-Leninist sociological approaches of the 1970s and 1980s, in chapter six I identify the continuity between the socialist and postsocialist periods in terms of strategies of political

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intervention, specifically a preference for supposedly apolitical research methods, or better said a tendency to obscure the political in technocratic governance.

Speaking to the methodology of the history of social science more broadly, George Steinmetz proposed the need to 1) connect texts and contexts, 2) use private and public documents, and 3) deploy the concept of semi-autonomous social fields.[32] To conclude this section, I briefly discuss how these methods are represented in my work, and also add to them a comparative approach in light of future research. I understand connecting texts and contexts to be the core task of intellectual history. In this dissertation, which is overwhelmingly based on the interpretation of texts, contexts range from other texts to institutional settings to party policies to oral history. Indeed, the first part of the dissertation can be considered a context for the second, and in addition my theoretical and methodological background, which I have sketched in this introduction, informs which texts I read and how I interpret them.

I reflect on the use of private and public documents, and the pitfalls of both, throughout the text. Here I would like to note that the distinction between the two is not always clear cut in the Romanian context: does an archive which is not open to the public, or which is otherwise very difficult to access contain public or private materials? My research in the library of the former Party Academy, currently in a dire condition, might have well been the last chance to see texts that are otherwise public and available elsewhere in their original context—that is, organized according to the epistemic categories of the 1970s and 1980s. Another example is that of the oral history interviews I use: they belong to a private archive, and due to the specific conditions in which they were conducted, I chose to anonymize them and build my entire analysis on the premise

[32] George Steinmetz, "How and Why Do We Write the History of the Social Sciences?," *IAS.edu*, 2018, https://www.ias.edu/ideas/steinmetz-history-social-sciences.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

that it is not important who the specific individuals whose trajectories I reconstruct were. Nevertheless, anyone with a knowledge of the small sociological community in Romania would be able to identify them, and so I do include the names of the interviewees at the beginning of each section based on oral history interviews.

I have argued in the previous section why I maintain that the field approach is not applicable to the case of the social scientists whose works I discuss in this dissertation. I attempt to correct for the "field-effect" of categorizing them along three broad scientific paradigms in the first half of the dissertation by focusing on the interactions between them in the second part. Yet for a full-fledged history of interactions new methodologies are needed, which would involve multiplying not just the kinds of actors and the kinds of possible interventions, but also the contexts themselves.

One way to achieve this, I propose, is to apply the methods developed for the history of political thought in East Central Europe—the flexible use of symmetrical and asymmetrical comparisons, the move between local, regional, and transnational levels, the identification of transfers, etc.—for cases of intellectual thought which are marginal to both the local and regional canons. I draw this insight from the peculiar situation of the historiography of Marxist revisionist thought in state socialist Romania, overwhelmingly concerned with the question of why there was no Marxist intellectual and political opposition in the country. We owe the first explanation of the failure of critical Marxism in the Romanian context, dating from the second half of the 1980s, to Michael Shafir, then analyst for Radio Free Europe. He had closely followed the Marxist humanist arguments emerging in the late 1960s in the press, recognized them to be of the same genre as the Marxist revisionist literature elsewhere in the Eastern bloc, watched as the arguments turned into debate, and recorded when the debate died out. Shafir concluded that "the containment of the nascent forces of change was

facilitated in Romania's case by party-monolithism, by the absence of a Marxist tradition and of a Marxist 'clientele' among potential reformist forces, and by the regime's cunning exploitation of a number of distinctive features in the political culture of the intelligentsia."[33] Romanian intellectuals, he argued, were prone to express values which they did not hold, provided this brought them substantial benefits, "in a *quid pro quo* of Ottoman origins." The party had speculated this in order to "'co-opt' former political rebels into the silence of officially-sanctioned prestige."[34]

The fact that this still reads as a compelling argument today should give us pause. Except for the Orientalist reference to the "Ottoman origins" of Romania's political culture, which has been thankfully rendered unacceptable by decades of post-colonial theorizing leaving their mark on the historiography of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, mainly by force of the powerful advocacy of historians from the region, the underlying premise of the explanation endured. There is something specific to the Romanian case, goes the argument, and that specificity comes to the fore in a regional context. The regional scope of Radio Free Europe was certainly conducive of this approach, yet the premise is that of area studies more generally, whereas the type of structural comparison comes from the toolkit of historical sociology.

Over the past decade, comparative and transnational histories of East Central Europe stemming from the region have destabilized the normative element implicit in structural comparisons inherited from the postwar period, in the process also challenging the static imaginary of area studies to create space for intraregional and transnational dialogue, transfers, and mutual reflection. This resulted in the project of a history of European

[33] Michael Shafir, "Political Stagnation and Marxist Critique: 1968 and beyond in Comparative East European Perspective," *British Journal of Political Science* 14, no. 4 (1984): 459.
[34] Ibid., 458.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

political modernity rooted in the reappraisal of East Central European political thought as part of a common European intellectual history of the past two centuries.[35] One of the main lessons of this project was that by rethinking a given national canon of intellectual thought within a regional and cross-European framework, while some of the central elements of the canon might be pushed to the margins, otherwise invisible authors, works, or strands of political thought would also be pushed to the fore. In this framework, my dissertation is a mono-national history without being a national history. As with the case of Marxism revisionism in state socialist Romania, it points to strands of intellectual thought marginalized in the interplay between regional and transnational frames of reference, as well as invisible in the dynamic between the local and the regional.[36] It suggests that this marginality might itself be thematized in future research.

4. *An intellectual genealogy of the project, with acknowledgements*

"Stories and metaphors make the sociologist's profession," explained one of the sociologists I interviewed for this dissertation, recalling how in the second half of the 1970s, searching for unpublished statistical data on migration for his dissertation, he arrived at the director of the Central Statistical Office. "Comrade Sandu," the director asked him, "Do you have zinc at your institute?" "Zinc?" he asked back, puzzled. "Yes, zinc. Doesn't your institute have a printing press?" Still in search for statistical data, the story continued, he arrived to an economist from the State Planning Committee. This was the kind of person who had a heart-attack on the corridors of the Central

[35] Balázs Trencsényi, Maciej Janowski, Monika Baar, Maria Falina, and Michal Kopecek, "Introduction," in *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, vol. 1: *Negotiating Modernity in the "Long Nineteenth Century"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1–14.
[36] While almost none of the authors in this dissertation figure in the regional canon, conversely few of the Romanian authors included in the regional canon figure in this dissertation. See Balázs Trencsényi, Michal Kopeček, Luka Lisjak Gabrijelčič, Maria Falina, Mónika Baár, and Maciej Janowski, *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, vol. 2: *Negotiating Modernity in the "Short Twentieth Century" and Beyond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

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Committee after realizing that cuts just approved by the party were, in economic terms, impossible. He shared statistical data as well as the fact that at the State Planning Committee they closed themselves in the office whenever they needed to, and freely criticized Nicolae Ceauşescu. As the story concluded, the sociologist telling it revealed it to be a metaphor about human and professional solidarity and how "it made the mechanism work." As far as stories and metaphors go, this also happens to illustrate the process of conceiving this dissertation.

How was data about society collected, aggregated, and interpreted, and to what end, in state socialist Romania? This question originally emerged from the observation that the categorization of social facts not only outlasted social change, but it could also be constitutive of it. My approach to archives as not just repositories of documents but "cultural agents of 'fact' production, of taxonomies in the making, and of state authority,"[37] was fostered by the proximity to the Open Society Archives, which hosts what its director, István Rév, affectionately calls "the largest collection of lies." The archive of Radio Free Europe has become over the years the site of sophisticated exploration of the relationship between information gathering, the production of knowledge, and the circulation of facts during the Cold War, an intricate system made ever more complex by the mirroring of very similar pursuits in secret police archives across the Eastern bloc.[38] István Rév and Ioana Macrea-Toma have also established it over the years as a workshop for history students to question the broader issues of historical genealogy, truth and truthfulness, and objectivity. While I have not conducted systematic research in the archive of Radio Free Europe for this dissertation, reflection

[37] Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 87–109.
[38] Ioana Macrea-Toma, "The Eyes of Radio Free Europe: Regimes of Visibility in the Cold War Archives," *East Central Europe* 44, no. 1 (2017): 99–127.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

on the archive itself, especially the way in which it maps the changing Cold War understanding of the nature, structure, and functioning of state socialism, built into my own approach to sources not as repositories of a historical truth waiting to be uncovered, but as elements in articulating a truthful account of the past without undermining the very idea of truth itself.[39]

A similar concern with truth and truthfulness animated historians, sociologists, and anthropologists who were conducting research into secret police archives in order to reconstruct the logic of surveillance, intelligence gathering, and state violence on its own terms, and arrived at terms which were inherently dialogical, such as "police aesthetics."[40] Romanian secret police officers had recognized themselves in the ethnographic research practices of an American anthropologist working in Transylvanian villages in the late 1970s and had kept her under surveillance for years as a spy, realized Katherine Verdery reading her own file, and proceeded to return the favor, writing an ethnography of the archives of the Secret Police.[41] Inspired by this insight and by research into the emergence of surveillance as a state practice characteristic of modernity across Europe, "a project rather than simply a source,"[42] I proposed that the intellectual infrastructure for acquiring, interpreting, and acting upon knowledge about socialist society in state socialist Romania was built up, beginning in the second half of the 1960s, by supposedly discreet groups of state functionaries, party members, secret police officers, and social scientists. This initial formulation of my

[39] Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 1–7.
[40] Cristina Vatulescu, *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film, and the Secret Police in Soviet Times* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).
[41] Katherine Verdery, *Secrets and Truth: Ethnography in the Archive of Romania's Secret Police* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014).
[42] Peter Holquist, "'Information Is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work': Bolshevik Surveillance in Its Pan-European Context," *The Journal of Modern History* 69, no. 3 (1997): 416.

project was indebted to the advice Karl Hall, then co-supervisor of the dissertation, and to the productive criticism of Constantin Iordachi and Ulf Brunnbauer.

After several months of research in the archives of the former Secret Police, however, I found that the argument that "the Securitate not only represented a particular form of knowledge during socialism but it was also a form of science deployed by the socialist state in order to make sense of and investigate the everyday reality of socialism,"[43] in that resembling the practices of anthropologists, was better made by an anthropologist than a historian. It is not just that the archive is not transparent regarding the institutional and epistemic conditions of its own production, a topic worthy of research in its own right, but that in order to formulate the right question one would need to know the answer in advance. I found myself in the situation of asking for data from an institution that would have gladly offered it, if only I would have known to ask for zinc printing plates instead.

At the time when I first met Zoltán Rostás, I was still conducting research in the Securitate archives. His remark that it had been historical materialism which first resulted in sociological research marked a turning point in my project. Over the numerous conversations we had in the past several years, he has been instrumental for my understanding of the Bucharest Sociological School and the trajectories of interwar sociologists in the postwar period. He has also generously shared with me materials from his personal oral history archive which often made the difference between painstakingly attempting to decode texts and contexts independently of the authors' interpretations of their own lives and grounding my hermeneutical work in a dialog with these interpretations. The third chapter of this dissertation is based on oral history

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[43] Florin Poenaru, "The Knowledge of the Securitate: Secret Agents as Anthropologists," *Studia UBB Sociologia* 62, no. 1 (2017): 108.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

interviews with sociologists trained under state socialism conducted by his students at the University of Bucharest and the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration. Yet perhaps most importantly, he was always graciously accepting of my inexplicable interest in the strand of sociological research with which he identified the least, and which in fact I believe stands for everything his pursuit of journalism, oral history, and the history of interwar sociology in the 1970s and 1980s was meant to avoid: Marxist-Leninist sociology.

Ideologically dogmatic, remote from social realities, and unable to integrate individual experience, Marxist-Leninist sociology consistently appears as "the other" in accounts of sociologists trained under state socialism. This is also reflected in the immensely influential anthropological literature on culture in state socialist Romania originating in the 1980s. While it is clear from oral history interviews that for many sociologists trained under state socialism the failure to engage with Marxism-Leninism was a crucial formative experience, I argue that in order to be able to account for what the sociologists actually did instead of what they failed to do, one needs to move beyond the metaphor of the cultural field structured by the mechanism of the economy of scarcity.

Going back to the story of the proposed exchange of statistical data for zinc printing plates, my interviewee, who reflected that he had told me this story to show that "such things were happening as well," nevertheless mentioned that even if he did not have zinc, he did in fact receive some statistical data, "probably because they saw that I'm crazy." What the approach to intellectuals under state socialism as reproducing the structure of domination by engaging in competition over scarce resources fails to account for is exactly the "crazy." This is not to say that actors did not subjectively perceive themselves as "outside of the field," yet that does not mean that the field was actually there. To account for the different approaches to the social within the

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

sociological community, one option would be to move from the classical sociology of intellectuals towards a more flexible sociology of intervention, and focus on "the movement, the maneuver by which a historically specific truth-producing practice becomes an effective tool of intervention."[44] For future research, this might allow to explain why both Marxist-Leninist sociologists, intensely invested in the production of ideology, and the sociologists trained as "social engineers" were marginalized at the end of the 1970s without brushing over the real differences between them. Thinking about sociological work in terms of intervention would allow for different projects to have failed for different reasons.

This brings me to my final point and the meaning of the extended metaphor of writing this dissertation: human and professional solidarity. I was fortunate to be trained in comparative history at what appears, looking back, as the high time for thoughtful transnational collaboration in the region, which resulted in the remarkable project of the history of modern political thought in East Central Europe. It was from the driving force of this project and my mentor, Balázs Trencsényi, that I learned the value of comparative and collaborative work, and the importance of "building the institutions" to foster it. Most of this dissertation was written while the university that hosted me for eight years was being targeted by an authoritarian regime passing "absurd laws that cannot be discussed." By the time I graduate, it will no longer be able to enroll any new students in Budapest. While it is yet unclear how this will affect the university community, I have learned enough from the life stories of the sociologists whose works I analyze in this dissertation to know that along with existential and professional

[44] Gil Eyal and Larissa Buchholz, "From the Sociology of Intellectuals to the Sociology of Interventions," *Annual Review of Sociology* 36, no. 1 (2010): 123.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

turnabout, entire genealogies of intellectual thought might be severed in the process. The story of how institutions are rebuilt still remains to be written.

I am grateful for the solidarity of the community at the History Department, to the many colleagues who engaged with my work over the years, and for reading and helping improve parts of this dissertation, talking things through, and offering their support when I most needed it, I thank Laura Ciolacu, Yulia Karpova, Ágnes Kelemen, Ágnes Kende, Réka Krizmanics, Liliana Iuga, Zsófia Loránd, Ioana Macrea-Toma, Anna Nakai, and Gábor Szegedi. As a genealogy of intellectual thought in East Central Europe, this work would not have been possible in any other context.

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PART I: CONTEXTS

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Chapter 1. The challenge of "the social"

> Somebody complains they failed an exam because they didn't know the difference between socialism and capitalism, to which another replies: "That's for the best; the person who knew it got a five-year sentence."[1]

When he wrote this joke down in his diary in 1978, the Marxist intellectual Tudor Bugnariu held no illusions about the difference between socialism and capitalism. Retired from the university after several decades of teaching historical materialism in Cluj and Bucharest, he was closely following international politics, the debates surrounding Eurocommunism, as well as the regular accounts in the Western leftist press of human rights violations and political repression in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This was no longer the time when one could buy *Le Monde* from the newsstand, but those who had a subscription for foreign magazines still received them more or less regularly. As far as the situation in Romania went, Bugnariu had painstakingly, and with profound distaste, documented the exacerbation of the "personality cult" in the aftermath of the devastating March 1977 earthquake. He considered the violent attacks and the imprisonment of Paul Goma after the publication of his letter in support of Charter 77 a clear case of suppression of human rights. And he noted the almost complete silence surrounding the Valea Jiului miners' strike in August the same year.

His diaries from the late 1970s are rife with disdain at the distorted image of Romania projected in party documents and abroad, particularly the suggestion that socialism, in its existing form, would automatically spun freedom and democratic rights. There were no rights to free speech, political organization outside the party, or strikes in Romania,

[1] Biblioteca Centrală Universitară "Lucian Blaga" Cluj-Napoca, Colecţii speciale [henceforth BCU Cluj], Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 44/VI, Diary 8 August 1978–31 December 1978, p. 6.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Bugnariu maintained.[2] Having seen the mechanisms for addressing abuses within the system rendered ineffective over the years, he concluded that the existing democratic institutions had become merely a simulacrum used to legitimize socialism internationally. Bugnariu also anticipated that pretend democracy would be turned against the interests of the workers themselves. Commenting on the economic reform of 1978, which sought to replace the total production indicator with the net production indicator in planning, to introduce decentralization, and to promote workers' self-management in an attempt to increase economic efficiency, Bugnariu located the lack of democracy at the heart of the political system itself:

> After centralist management led to the bankruptcy of the national economy, an attempt is made to redress it through self-management. But there was not one word of self-criticism and what is more important, no effort to take it to its logical consequences, thus keeping silent about the fact that without the democratization of the party [added on the margin: and without proper labor unions] "self-management" can also become a simulacrum, just like the total production indicator, only this time on the backs of the working people.[3]

The situation, as Bugnariu saw it, was deteriorating. This followed from his belief that the crisis of socialism originated not with Marxist theory, but with Stalinism, which had not spared any socialist country of violence and had betrayed the aspirations held by many for the power of the few. As he asked rhetorically: "What did Stalin's regime have in common with Marxism, except for the use of the names of Marx and Lenin, how faithful towards their teaching were the parties which followed Stalin's line for revolution and the construction of socialism?"[4] Like in the joke he had written down in his diary, there was indeed more than one meaning to "knowing" when it came to Marxism, and this extended not just to its content, but especially to the way of knowing itself. Real existing socialism, for Bugnariu, rested on a fundamental misunderstanding

[2] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 44/III Diary 18 July 1977–10 October 1977, p. 83.
[3] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu 44/V, 1 January 1978–30 June 1978, p. 136.
[4] Ibid., 183.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

of Marxist epistemology. It is not by chance that he mentioned the lack of self-criticism, for the Marxist dialectical process by which the world could be known and acted upon crucially applied to the knowers, as well.

This chapter reconstructs the intellectual context in which the very idea of an epistemological break between Marxism and Stalinism developed, reflecting the tension between the political and the epistemological challenge at the core of the de-Stalinization of social thought in Socialist Romania. By going back to the debate on the relationship between historical materialism, scientific socialism, and Marxist sociology at the beginning of the 1960s and locating it in the broader context of the Eastern bloc, I show how epistemological claims over the social delineated social scientists' possibilities for political action. The chapter then revisits the earliest empirical studies carried out by the historical materialism section of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of the Romanian People's Republic. The studies prompted a complex discussion about the ways in which social reality and social theory are mutually constitutive, seeking to offer models of intervention at the level of both discourse and practice. On the one hand, they opened avenues for conceptual innovation, while on the other hand they offered tools to identify systemic shortcomings of real-existing socialism. Around the mid-1960s, the failure to institutionalize concrete sociological research, as well as the debates surrounding these first attempts at "empirical philosophy," reflected the unresolved tension between the political and epistemological claims at de-Stalinization. This resulted in a series of contradictions between theory and practice, empirical research and analytical interpretation, and the object and subject of social research in the subsequent development of post-Stalinist Marxist-Leninist thought.

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I conclude by reconstructing the Marxist humanist discourse on the relationship between individual and society as an illustration of the historical materialist approach to the social after its delimitation from empirical social science, up to the late 1970s partial integration of the epistemological challenge of Marxism humanism into the emerging ideology of “pseudo-hegemonic” national communism.[5]

The revisionist Marxism of the 1960s and 1970s was fraught with contradictions, yet one should keep in mind that until the very end, for many social scientists resolving them was not just an intellectual, but also an existential concern. As Bugnariu reflected on the future with hope and anguish in 1978, on his sixty-ninth birthday:

> Of course, in spite of the constant worry, in spite of our disappointment at the discrepancy between hopes and reality, we must not give up the rational optimism which Marxism instils. The road to socialism is irreversible, but it requires time. Future generations will get to know it, but at my age, who knows if I will ever see a “socialism with a human face,” the beginnings of which were nipped in the bud. […] It is impossible for things not to be mended, and future generations will enjoy a socialism fitting their aspirations, but it is discouraging to think of disappearing with grief in one’s soul for the failures of the collective action in which you engaged and for the failure of one’s personal life.[6]

1. *Marxist-Leninist social sciences after 1956*

After a failed attempt at political de-Stalinization from within the party in 1956, and student unrest in several of the main university centers in reaction to the Hungarian Revolution the same year, a wave of party purges and repression among intellectuals, academics, and students followed in 1957–58. There was a clear political drive to the repression, which targeted intellectuals known for their non-Marxist views, for their ties to the interwar right-wing intelligentsia, or for their social background. At the same

[5] See Emanuel Copilaş, *Naţiunea socialistă: Politica identităţii în epoca de aur* [The socialist nation: Identity politics in the golden epoch] (Iaşi: Polirom, 2015).
[6] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 44/V, p. 183v.

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time, the ethnic composition of educational and cultural institutions had become a concern, resulting in discriminatory measures disproportionately affecting those of Hungarian and Jewish origin. Finally, repression also had an epistemological dimension, targeting deviation from Marxism-Leninism, the body of knowledge systematized as dialectical and historical materialism, political economy, and scientific socialism.

Under the umbrella of revisionism, topics deemed inappropriate ranged from rural economic monographs to Keynesianism to forensic psychology. Gheorghe Retegan, Egon Balas, and Tiberiu Bogdan, respectively, are just three examples of the crackdown on social scientists in 1958–59. Retegan, a statistician and former member of the interwar sociological school of Dimitrie Gusti, coordinated economic monographic research in villages at the Economic Research Institute in 1957–58. Together with the institute's then deputy director, the economist Costin Murgescu, he argued that interwar methodological expertise could be dissociated from the "idealist" theory of Gusti and recovered for the purpose of Marxist analysis. This suggestion was harshly criticized in the main theoretical journal of the party, *Lupta de clasă* (Class struggle), by the institute's party secretary. He took issue in particular with the implication that scientific and political activity should be considered separately, the one's aim being objectivity, the other's persuasion.[7] Retegan's department was subsequently reorganized. By the same logic, Egon Balas's Marxist critique of Keynesianism, published in 1958, was received with hostility, deemed "alien to Marxist thinking" in a series of virulent reviews, and withdrawn from circulation.[8] Balas, a dedicated member of the communist party since 1941, who had been imprisoned for two years in the 1952 wave of party

[7] For a more detailed account, see chapter 2.
[8] Egon Balas, *Will to Freedom: A Perilous Journey through Fascism and Communism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 351.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

purges and had joined the Economic Research Institute in 1956, was again expelled from the party and lost his job in 1959.

At the University of Bucharest, Bugnariu, appointed dean in 1958, after he had been himself removed as deputy Minister of Education over the student unrest in 1956, took note of several cases of discrimination against faculty: Oscar Hoffman, who lost his job as a lecturer in the Philosophy Department in 1958, after refusing to testify in the trials against students;[9] Ştefan Costea, who was removed from the university without any explanation the same year;[10] and Tiberiu Bogdan, who was dismissed in 1959 for allegedly failing to obtain department approval for his students' dissertation topics. Bogdan published and taught on forensic psychology, an unusual topic at the time, and coordinated research on juvenile delinquency at the university. As late as 1961, when following investigations Bugnariu concluded that his removal from his post had been illegal, it was with reference to similar studies carried out in the Soviet Union that Bogdan sought to legitimize his field of research.[11]

It was in this context of tightened control over the orthodoxy of Marxist social science that the National Sociological Committee was established. The committee was meant to facilitate international cooperation in the field of sociology, most notably the Romanian delegation's participation at the world congresses in Milan (1959) and Washington (1962). It was made up of a small number of academicians and professors, and the papers they prepared for these two occasions illustrate the horizon of what was considered sociology at the end of the 1950s in Socialist Romania: the logician Athanase Joja, who led the committee, presented jointly with the psychologist Mihail

[9] Ştefan Costea, ed., *Sociologi români: Mică enciclopedie* [Romanian sociologists: Small encyclopedia] (Bucharest: Expert, 2001), 253.
[10] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 70, p. 445.
[11] Ibid., 449–51.

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Ralea and the economist Vasile Malinschi on methodological problems of sociological research; the economist Manea Mănescu discussed the use of time budgets in industrial sociology and for the investigation of living conditions; the legal scholar Traian Ionaşcu presented the legislation on sex equality; the philosopher C. I. Gulian offered criticism of idealist theories in the sociology of religion; whereas Tudor Bugnariu prepared a talk on Romanian sociologists in the service of the masses and their mobilization for meeting the requirements of historical progress. The papers, which mapped the methodological and thematical imaginary of the Marxist-Leninist scientific approach to the social, were often explicitly polemical towards contemporary "bourgeois sociology," considered to be merely apologetic of capitalism. Lack of theoretical foundations, eclecticism, empiricism, objectivism, and positivism: these were yet the words of the day in what was presented as a confrontation between rival political and scientific worldviews.[12]

Tudor Bugnariu's membership in the committee was typical of a successful postwar academic career, which combined teaching, research, administrative, and political duties. His background, while recommending him as a representative of the progressive interwar intelligentsia, was nevertheless sufficiently complex to never translate into a high-ranking political position. By the mid-1950s, Bugnariu was also aware of this, as an extensive "institutional autobiography"[13] dating from his time as vice-dean of the

[12] T. B. [Tudor Bugnariu], "Activities of the National Sociological Committee," *The Rumanian Journal of Sociology* I (1962): 225–29. On the National Sociological Committee, see also Ştefan Bososmitu, "Tudor Bugnariu şi un proiect eşuat de instituţionalizare a sociologiei în România comunistă" [Tudor Bugnariu and a failed institutionalization project of sociology in Communist Romania], *Revista română de sociologie* 28, nos. 1–2 (2017): 57–60.

[13] Ştefan Bosomitu published an analysis of six autobiographical texts written by Tudor Bugnariu between 1947 and 1960, detailing the practice of institutional autobiographies in Socialist Romania more generally, and the various aspects of Bugnariu's successive identity building with reference to the party in particular. See Ştefan Bosomitu, "'Becoming in the Age of Proletariat': The Identity Dilemmas of a Communist Intellectual Reflected throughout Autobiographical Texts; Case Study: Tudor Bugnariu," *History of Communism in Europe* 5 (2014): 17–35.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

"Victor Babeş" University in Cluj suggests.[14] Born in 1909 in Budapest, where his father had been posted at the time from Transylvania, Bugnariu grew up in Cluj from the age of ten. He studied philosophy and Romanian literature and became active in the anti-fascist student groups and later the progressive academic circle at the university. In 1934, he was named secretary of the Regional Antifascist Committee and became member of the communist party, shortly before it was declared illegal. He continued to be active in the movement even after he was arrested and spent ten months in prison in 1936, was arrested again, together with his wife and sister, in 1937 and was continuously harassed by the police after another ten months spent in prison. As he described this period in his autobiography, whereas the occasion of his first arrest was exploited by the party for a broadly publicized anti-fascist campaign, the second trial was less politicized. The appeal was successful as it took place only several days after the court verdict of the Iron Guard leader Ion Zelea Codreanu, yet Bugnariu felt his ties to the party were weakened because of the frequent arrests, a fault not of his own. In the mid-1950s, he suggested that this situation was behind his dissenting opinion on the issue of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop pact:

> Not having close enough ties with the party and being influenced by the petit-bourgeois circles, especially the Jewish ones, in the panic after the Munich Betrayal I mistakenly evaluated the non-aggression pact signed in Moscow between the Soviet Union and the Third Reich. In this matter I had numerous discussions with the comrades, allowing myself to be convinced only with great difficulty.[15]

As the war started, within one year Bugnariu was a political prisoner in the Caracal camp in Southern Romania, delivered to the Hungarian authorities in Transylvania after the Second Vienna Award, and then expulsed from the Someşeni camp next to Cluj

[14] Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 16 – "Amintiri: Autobiografie Cluj" [Memoires: Autobiography Cluj]. The autobiography is not dated but based on the content it was most probably written in 1955.
[15] Ibid., 9

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

back to Romania in 1940. He lived in hiding before returning to Cluj under the Hungarian civil administration, where he contributed to the only Romanian-language magazine in Transylvania, *Tribuna Ardealului*, attempting to push for an anti-fascist line together with other progressive intellectuals. He was drafted in the Hungarian Second Army in 1942 and after its defeat at the Don River returned to Cluj.

As the Soviet front was approaching, Bugnariu deplored not having been able to put up organized resistance against the persecution of the Jews in Transylvania. Without the support of the party, which had been decimated in a wave of arrests, and without having ties to the workers, he had not been able to alert the Jewish population "to fight for their freedom and their lives," and could only carry out small, individual actions to help them.[16] In 1944, he was briefly named mayor under the Soviet administration, at a time of heightened nationalist tension, and from 1946 he held several positions as cultural advisor, including at the Romanian embassy in Belgrade.

Bugnariu taught general sociology at the "Victor Babeş" University before 1948, but it was from 1949 that he became dedicated full-time to academic life, teaching in the departments of Marxism-Leninism and later dialectical and historical materialism, and serving on the university party committee. He held a similar position at the University of Bucharest before being recalled to Cluj in 1953, where he juggled administrative and political duties both at the university and the Philosophy Institute of the Academy. He found himself overwhelmed with responsibilities, and felt his scientific activity suffered the most. Bugnariu published little in the 1950s and expressed his surprise at being elected corresponding member of the Academy. "Without a doubt," he noted,

[16] Ibid., 17. On this point, Bugnariu modified the text repeatedly, which suggests that there was no accepted master narrative regarding the Holocaust which he could rely on in presenting the situation. Much later, in the 1980s, he circulated in samizdat an account of that period, denouncing claims that rescue missions were organized to save Jews in the order of thousands.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

"the trust advanced through this election must be honored without delay. Yet instead of obtaining better working conditions in order to live up to the title of academician, in 1955 I was also named vice-dean of the 'Victor Babeş' University."[17] It was not long thereafter that he was appointed deputy to the minister of education, removed in 1956, and transferred first to the "A. A. Zhdanov" Social Sciences Institute and then to the Philosophy Faculty of the University of Bucharest as dean and head of the dialectical and historical materialism department.[18]

By the end of the 1950s, after a decade of being posted between Cluj and Bucharest, Bugnariu oversaw the first textbook of historical materialism that was not a translation of Soviet material, coordinating lecturers from both university centers for this task. Among them were Ion Drăgan, Ludwig Grūnberg, Paul Popovici, Ovidiu Trăsnea, and Vlad Constantinescu from Bucharest, and Ernő Gáll, Călina Mare, and Andrei Roth from Cluj. Published in 1961, the textbook is a good indication of what represented the Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy on the social at the beginning of the 1960s. Historical materialism was defined as Marxist-Leninist sociology, the task of which was to "offer a scientific solution to the problem of the relationship between social existence and social consciousness, the fundamental problem of the science of society."[19] In this sense, it represented the theoretical and methodological basis of all the specialized social sciences. The textbook proceeded to discuss the main topics of Marxist-Leninist sociology, such as the base and superstructure, social classes and class struggle, socialist revolution, the state, and the forms of social consciousness—political and juridical ideology, ethics, art, science, and religion. A chapter on the role of the popular

[17] Ibid., 23.
[18] Bosomitu, "Tudor Bugnariu," 65.
[19] *Materialism istoric* [Historical materialism], vol. 2 of *Curs de materialism dialectic şi istoric* [Textbook of dialectical and historical materialism] (Bucharest: Editura de stat didactică şi pedagogică, 1960), 20.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

masses and personalities in history spoke both against the "bourgeois" minimization of the former in favor of the latter, and against the cult of personality, never mentioning Stalin by name. Concluding the textbook, the main currents of contemporary bourgeois sociology were criticized as so many theoretical tools in the tactical class struggle of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, each addressing the needs of a particular stage in the evolution of the contradictions of capitalism.[20] All were thought to rest on an idealist conception of the fundamental sociological problem of the relation between social existence and social consciousness, giving precedence to either biological or geopolitical considerations, individual consciousness (as in sociometry and the sociology of small groups), or divinity in their understanding of the social.

The textbook was well received. Deemed both scientifically rigorous and politically militant, it was nevertheless shown to be lacking in its integration of the creative application of historical materialism by the Workers' Party in Romania, in its treatment of the concrete experience of socialist transformation and especially the emerging role of the scientific and technological revolution, and in its discussion of the ongoing theoretical debates in the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc.[21] The revision of Marxism-Leninism in the following several years should be understood along these lines, as a process of challenging and reestablishing the Marxist-Leninist science of the social through the gradual reintegration of new content, leading to the defining of Marxism-Leninism by its very ability to revise itself.

[20] Ibid., 369.

[21] Alexandru Tănase and Gheorghe Chepeş, "Un manual folositor de materialism istoric" [A useful textbook of historical materialism], *Cercetări filozofice* 9, no. 5 (1962): 1295–1303.

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2. *What is to be debated*

The first challenge to the established understanding of the science of the social was almost concomitant with the publication of the historical materialism textbook. Across the Eastern bloc, the discussions concerning the relationship between historical materialism, scientific socialism, and Marxist sociology began in the second half of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. Acknowledging the extent to which empirical sociological research was already being pursued, as well as the stakes of the ongoing theoretical debates, in the autumn of 1961 *Problems of Peace and Socialism* (*Probleme ale păcii şi socialismului*), the theoretical organ of the Communist and Workers' Parties, organized a roundtable on this topic with Marxist sociologists from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union.[22] The report offered a picture of Marxist sociology unified against both "revisionism" and bourgeois criticism, and particularly against their attempt to relegate historical materialism to "pure philosophy." It reaffirmed that concrete sociological research could not be separated from historical and dialectical materialism, as its theoretical basis. Conversely, the report rejected anti-empiricism as well, denouncing the reductive pretensions of the dogmatic Marxism-Leninism inclined to operate by deductions and the broadest generalizations alone. Finally, the participants agreed that concrete sociological research was not to be understood as an end in itself, but as an instrument of social intervention and rationalization in the service of the party and state. Both in its guiding theory and in its methods, it was meant to distinguish itself from the gratuitous empiricism and the theoretical poverty of bourgeois sociology.

[22] "Întâlnirea sociologilor marxişti" [The meeting of Marxist sociologists], *Probleme ale păcii şi socialismului* 2 (1962): 77–81.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

This overly neat picture of an emerging consensus among Marxist sociologists in the Eastern bloc skillfully brushed over not only the individual theoretical differences which separated the Polish Adam Schaff from the Bulgarian Zhivko Oshavkov, or the Soviets Gennady Osipov and Boris Grushin from the Czech Miloš Kaláb, some of whom explicitly advocated that Marxist sociology and historical materialism be treated as separate disciplines, or that Marxist sociology was rather the domain of scientific communism. It also obscured the range of configurations under which the debate over historical and dialectical materialism, scientific socialism, and Marxist sociology had surfaced in the various institutional contexts and under the different ideological climates in the Eastern bloc. Moreover, it did not show how these intertwined to produce, throughout the 1960s, foci of critical research and post-Stalinist Marxist social thought in fields as diverse as youth, religiosity and scientific atheism, the sociology of deviance, or the sociology of everyday life.

As argued by Michael Voříšek for Poland, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia, Marxism-Leninism was, at least for the period up to the end of the 1960s, an "ideology that mattered" in the development of sociology, in that far from being an "external intrusion," it was actually an integral part of the discipline's intellectual design.[23] Specifically, Voříšek showed how establishing Marxist sociology required working from within the Stalinist orthodoxy on sociology's place among the three disciplines of Marxism-Leninism (dialectical and historical materialism, political economy, and scientific socialism/communism). In the Soviet Union the debates proceeded with epistemic anxiety for almost a decade, to settle towards the end of the 1960s on a

[23] For his argument and analysis of the Polish, Soviet, and Czechoslovak debates, summarized in what follows, see Michael Voříšek, "Ideology that Mattered: The Debates on Historical Materialism and Sociology in the USSR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, 1948–1968," in Lukáš Babka and Petr Roubal (eds.), *Prague Perspectives II: A New Generation of Czech East European Studies* (Prague: National Library of the Czech Republic, 2007), 121–56.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

"multilevel model of sociology" which maintained that general sociological theory was part of historical materialism while opening up space for both mid-range "special sociological theories," and for relatively autonomous concrete sociological research. This consensus, much like the institutional setting of sociology in the Soviet Union, proved fragile and regularly vulnerable to purges and accusations of heterodoxy. In Poland, the survival of interwar sociologists played an important part in giving weight to the view that Marxist sociology was merely "one among many." Here the orthodox identification of historical materialism with sociology was already being challenged from Marxist revisionist positions in the mid-1950s, and given the discipline's rapid institutionalization the debate quickly concluded, by the early 1960s, with the assertion of sociology's autonomy from historical materialism. In Czechoslovakia the range of solutions to the issue of sociology's place in the canon of Marxist sciences in the mid-1950s was more varied: sociology was either identified with historical materialism, which was to consequently become an empirical science; it was thought to be an entirely different discipline, separate from philosophy; or tied to scientific communism as a science of management. Following a period of tightened ideological control at the end of the 1950s, the debate was settled by default with the expansion of empirical sociological research, and by the mid-1960s sociology's autonomy from historical materialism was no longer contested.

How does the debate in Romania compare to those in the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc? Opened in the early 1960s, the topic of sociology's place within the Marxist-Leninist canon of sciences was still being discussed, in fits and starts, towards the end of the decade. The Third Congress of the Romanian Workers' Party in 1960 had witnessed the general secretary Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej commenting on the mismatch between concrete social realities that are in constant flux and the abstract character of

social scientific works,[24] a statement taken to signal, in Marxist-Leninist parlance, that the relation between social existence and its reflection at the level of knowledge production was now open for discussion. Participants had good reason, however, to show epistemic anxieties over the orthodoxy of the different solutions proposed, similarly to the case of the Soviet Union. One of the sources of these anxieties was the strong interwar sociological tradition that combined a monographic, interdisciplinary method of empirical research, a conservative project of sociocultural reform, and an overarching theory of sociology as the science of the nation. Just a few years before, in 1958, researchers who had been carrying out monographic studies of village communities at the Economic Research Institute of the Romanian Academy, among them the former member of Dimitrie Gusti's interwar sociological school, Gheorghe Retegan, had been publicly denounced for their "objectivism," "idealism," lack of ideological commitment, unproblematized take-over of bourgeois sociological methods from the interwar period, and the misguided attempt to rehabilitate Dimitrie Gusti, while the section of the institute was reorganized.[25] Yet in 1961, hesitantly, the historical materialism department of the Philosophy Institute started conducting new empirical research, as a counterpart to theoretical investigations on the topic of "socialist consciousness." Their results, published in 1964, bore the subtitle of "sociological research." In the course of five years, sociology had reentered circulation, and not long thereafter it was integrated in both research and teaching institutions throughout the country. The swiftness, sheer variety of opinions, and ultimate

[24] Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Raport la cel de-al III-lea Congres al Partidului Muncitoresc Român* [Report on the third Congress of the Romanian Workers' Party] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1960), 99–100.

[25] Zoltán Rostás, "The Rehabilitation of Romanian Sociology after Stalinism," in Adela Hîncu and Victor Karady, eds., *Social Sciences in the Other Europe since 1945* (Budapest: Pasts, Inc. Center for Historical Studies, forthcoming).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

inconclusiveness of the debate, which was finally abandoned to sociological practice, best resemble the situation in Czechoslovakia.

Beyond these parallels, in reconstructing the initial exchanges between social scientists in state socialist Romania, I would like to broaden the argument on the ways in which ideology mattered in this debate. First, it should be taken into account that the debate created a moment of opportunity not just for sociology, but various other social sciences within the Marxist-Leninist canon (most notably political science, social psychology, and anthropology). Rather than being merely the device for sociology's emancipation as an autonomous discipline, abandoned as soon as sociology created a solid institutional framework for itself, at a deeper level the debate signaled that core tenets of Marxist-Leninist epistemology could now be questioned. Perhaps the single most consequential challenge was to the conceptualization of the relation between ideology, social practice, and social reality, and along with it of the role of individual agency under socialism.[26] Marxism-Leninism's anti-disciplinary ethos, as reflected in its pretension of offering a unified theory of the dialectics between the natural and the social life, was from this broader perspective the unintended casualty of the process of ideological reshuffling, and had unpredictable consequences in the long run. Therefore, I argue that participants in the debate speculated the moment of negotiation not merely for narrow disciplinary interests, but also in order to advance Marxist revisionist and Marxist humanist agendas which carried beyond the exchanges over the issue of sociology. Indeed, it was professors of Marxism-Leninism, in its various guises, who were originally engaged in the debate, many of whom never went on to practice sociology as an empirical science, and with the exception of Tudor Bugnariu, never

[26] For the programmatic statement on the gradual decentering of the Stalinist collectivist ethos in the post-Stalinist period, see Krylova, "Soviet Modernity."

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

attempted to establish it institutionally. Following through within the same logic, the interest in empirical research itself, as will be discussed in the second part of this chapter, can also be interpreted not just as a drive towards the scientification of the social sciences, but also as a symptom of the epistemological shift to post-Stalinist social thought.

The discussion about the relation between Marxist sociology, historical materialism, and scientific socialism was inaugurated in the main philosophy journal, *Cercetări filozofice* (Philosophical studies), which published Radu Florian's article "On the object of historical materialism and Marxist-Leninist sociology"[27] in the first issue of 1962. Born in 1927 in Iaşi to a Jewish family, Florian had survived the June 1941 pogrom in which his father and brother lost their lives.[28] After the war he joined the Romanian Workers' Party, finished his studies in Bucharest, and beginning in 1949 taught in the Marxism-Leninism (later renamed scientific socialism) department at the Faculty of Philosophy, then led by Leonte Tismăneanu. Responsible in the 1950s for the course on the history of the Romanian Workers' Party, which synthesized the activities of the communist movement, Florian later taught scientific socialism. His interest in the work of Antonio Gramsci, specifically as an anti-dogmatic, creative reworking of Marxism as a philosophy of praxis,[29] led him to gradually reformulate the object of the otherwise

[27] Radu Florian, "Cu privire la obiectul materialismului istoric şi al sociologiei Marxist-Leniniste" [On the object of historical materialism and Marxist-Leninist sociology], *Cercetări filozofice*, no. 1 (1962): 135–50.
[28] Radu Florian, "The Jassy Massacre of June 29–30, 1941: An Early Act of Genocide against the Jews," in Randolph L. Braham, ed., *The Destruction of Romanian and Ukrainian Jews during the Antonescu Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).
[29] Gramsci's *Scrisori din închisoare* [Letters from prison], the first of the *Prison Notebooks*, was published in Romanian in 1955. A volume of other selected texts was edited by Pavel Apostol in 1969, followed by one edited by Titus Pârvulescu in 1973. In his *Antonio Gramsci, un marxist contemporan* [Antonio Gramsci: A contemporary Marxist] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1982), Radu Florian offered an overview of Gramsci's work as an illustration of the possibility for creative Marxism during the interwar, dogmatic (i.e., Stalinist) period and "a lesson about the fundamental importance of theory for revolutionary practice" (252).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

poorly regarded and ill-defined discipline and to model, in the 1970s and 1980s, "political thinking"[30] within its framework.

The focus on political practice also underlined his argument against the epistemic hegemony of historical materialism in his 1962 article. Florian summarized three different views on the relation between historical materialism and sociology, as circulated in Soviet and Bulgarian sources: historical materialism and sociology overlap, with sociology being a part of Marxist-Leninist philosophy; historical materialism and sociology overlap, but concrete sociology, as a particular social science, has a different object than the Marxist-Leninist philosophy of history; Marxist-Leninist sociology is a non-philosophical science, a general sociology distinct (but not independent) from historical materialism in its content and character, which partly coincides with scientific socialism. The latter view, espoused by the Bulgarian sociologist Zivko Oshavkov, came closest to Florian's own answer to the question of sociology's place within the Marxist-Leninist canon.

For him, the crux of the matter was the relation between social existence and social consciousness, which going back to Marx, he argued, could only be mediated by scientific socialism, the science of the revolutionary transformation of society. Florian acknowledged the role of historical materialism as a general theory of knowledge and a methodological guide for the particular social sciences (juridical sciences, ethics, esthetics, history, etc.) as they specialized and broke away from philosophy. At the same time, he maintained that Marxist sociology had been formulated by the classics of Marxism-Leninism as "a free-standing, *non-philosophical* science, the main domain of which is scientific communism, which elaborates ways and means for the

[30] Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, *Filozofie şi politică, 1957–1962* [Philosophy and politics, 1957–1962] (Bucharest: Paideia, 2003), 162.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

revolutionary transformation of capitalist society and the construction of communism."[31] His position identified the domain of sociology with that of social praxis, individual and collective. Over the years, this would become part of his broader revisionist project of re-reading the works of Marx and Engels against the contemporary social realities of real-existing socialism, in which he attempted to recover the humanist roots of Marxist philosophy.[32]

The reactions to Radu Florian's argument in favor of scientific socialism were overwhelmingly critical. The first to respond were Paul Popovici and Ovidiu Trăsnea, his colleagues from the department of dialectical and historical materialism, who published only a few months later a study on the object of historical materialism and its relationship with scientific socialism, originally presented at the faculty's scientific seminar.[33] Popovici was among the few lecturers brought to the department who had studied at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy in Bucharest before the interwar philosophers Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, Mircea Florian, or Nae Ionescu had been purged.[34] He dedicated his career, up to the mid-1970s, to the systematization and teaching of historical materialism, which he conceived broadly as a "social philosophy."[35] Over the years Popovici was responsible for the historical materialism course, together with the head of the department, the illegalist Tudor Bugnariu, as well as for coordinating the 1971 four-volume revised textbook published by the department.

[31] Florian, "Cu privire la obiectul materialismului istoric," 150.
[32] Especially in Radu Florian, *Eppur, si muove!* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1983).
[33] Paul Popovici and Ovidiu Trăsnea, "Cu privire la caracterul şi obiectul materialismului istoric şi la raportul său cu socialismul ştiinţific" [On the character and object of historical materialism and its relation to scientific socialism], *Cercetări filozofice*, no. 3 (1962): 675–84.
[34] Vlăduţescu, *Filozofie şi politică*, 64–65.
[35] As formulated in his only published volume, Paul Popovici, *Esenţa societăţii: studiu de filozofie socială* [The essence of society: Study of social philosophy] (Bucharest: Editura didactică şi pedagogică, 1970).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

An eclectic and loosely structured mapping of the main themes of historical materialism, the textbook reflected well the character of the discipline, both overly determined and cumulative. Restating the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, such as the centrality of dialectical materialism, in relation to which historical materialism was the particular theory of the social level of existence, the textbook also encompassed, alongside chapters on the creation of society, social systems, and class structure, an overview of the issues of the masses, the individual, and their relation to society.[36] It is then not surprising that Popovici took issue with Radu Florian's argument for Marxist sociology as a separate, non-philosophical theory applied to the level of social formations. There was no need for a Marxist sociology to mediate between historical materialism as a general philosophical science and concrete sociological research—historical materialism was to remain the integrative science of the social.

Younger than Popovici, Trăsnea had been a member of the procommunist wing of the Social-Democratic Youth and later activist in the Union of Working Youth. He studied law in Bucharest starting in 1948, after the reform of higher education,[37] and later did his aspirantura in the Soviet Union on the topic of political consciousness and political doctrines. He sought to establish political science/political sociology as a separate field of research, first from the department of dialectical and historical materialism, and after 1966 from the department of sociology, articulating a Marxist perspective on the contemporary literature and the debates about the notions of political system, political parties, or pressure groups.[38] It is from this disciple-building perspective that his

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[36] *Materialism istoric* [Historical materialism], 4 vols. (Bucharest: Centrul de multiplicare al Universităţii din Bucureşti, 1971–1972).
[37] Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Lumea secretă a nomenclaturii* [The secret world of the nomenklatura] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2012), 270.
[38] See Ovidiu Trăsnea, *Probleme de sociologie polică* [Problems of political sociology] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1975).

position against identifying Marxist sociology with scientific socialism should be understood. Marxism-Leninism as a whole synthetized theoretically the practice of the construction of socialism, not scientific socialism—the argument went; moreover, political activity was not the object of sociology, but an entirely different social science—the science of politics.[39]

The most systematic critique of Radu Florian's position was formulated by Nicolae (Miklós) Kallós and Andrei Roth, from the historical materialism department at the Babeş-Bolyai University. The two made the case for historical materialism as Marxist sociology, effectively settling the debate. Their example best illustrates that the revision of Marxism-Leninism had not just narrowly disciplinary, but also existential stakes. Part of the generation who had embraced Stalinist Marxism-Leninism after the war as an alternative to both fascist ideology and religion, Kallós and Roth attempted to strike a balance between ideological rigor and intellectual flexibility in redefining historical materialism. Both had Hungarian-Jewish backgrounds, and their option for joining the communist movement, pursuing their studies in philosophy, and dedicating their careers to Marxist-Leninist research and teaching was closely linked to their experience of anti-Semitism, interwar fascism, and in Kallós's case deportation.

Kallós Miklós was born in 1924 in Oradea in an Orthodox Jewish family which did not engage in politics. He attended the local Jewish Neolog high school until 1944, and despite having to participate in forced labor during the war, felt sheltered from anti-Semitism by the community. When the Jews of Oradea were deported in May–June 1944, Kallós and his family were sent to Buchenwald and the surrounding labor camps.

[39] Ovidiu Trăsnea's *Ştiinţa politică: studiu istoric-epistemologic* (Bucharest: Editura politică, 1970) reframes the object of political science along these lines. Trăsnea published extensively in the field, and is credited to have modernized the discipline beyond its roots in scientific socialism.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

It was to this experience, and especially the organizing of the Communist prisoners within the camp, that Kallós traced back his political commitment: "I hadn't read Marxist literature, I knew nothing about Marxism, and I knew nothing about communism. I just met these people and I felt an attraction towards what they believed in."[40] Upon his return to Oradea, Kallós found out that he had lost both his parents. He joined the communist party, finished high school, and between 1948 and 1952 studied psychology and philosophy at the Bolyai University in Cluj. By the time he graduated, he had already been teaching as an assistant, a common practice following the 1948 higher education reform, which made the recruitment of newly trained communist cadres necessary. In the 1950s, he served as editor-in-chief of the Hungarian magazine *Utunk* and participated at the formulation of a Stalinist ideological line on issues of culture and social sciences consistent with the Romanian-language party organ *Lupta de clasă*. Yet apart from being a consequence of the centralization of ideological control, for many Hungarian and Jewish intellectuals the appeal of the 1950s Stalinist discourse, at a time of continuous ethnic tensions, was undeniably its internationalism. When in 1959 the Universities Bolyai and Victor Babeş were merged, Kallós took over as head of the dialectical and historical materialism (later philosophy) department from Andrei Roth, a position he held into the mid-1980s, successfully mediating between the faculty and the party apparatus.

Born in Timişoara in 1927, Roth had grown up in Arad and studied in Romanian schools until 1940, when Jewish students were expelled by the anti-Semitic legislation of the Antonescu government. Having studied in a private school set up by the Jewish community during the war, he graduated high school in 1944. That was also when he joined the communist party, a decision which he identified with taking a radical

[40] Interview by Cosmina Paul, February 2004, published at www.centropa.org/biography/miklos-kallos.

antifascist stance and as a moral duty.[41] Unlike the Jewish population of Northern Transylvania, the community in Arad survived the war without having been deported, yet in constant fear of the further radicalization of anti-Semitism in Romania after the 1941 pogroms.[42] The Hungarian army entered the city only several days before the Soviet one, and its attempt to round up the city's Jewish population was not carried through. Immediately after the war, Roth continued his studies at the Romanian Faculty of Letters and Philosophy in Cluj. Not drawn to Lucian Blaga's course on the philosophy of culture, he regarded D. D. Roşca, professor of the history of philosophy with a doctorate at Sorbonne on Hegel's influence on Taine, as the philosophical mentor of his generation. In 1948, when the faculty was reorganized and the departments of Marxism-Leninism (later scientific socialism), political economy, and dialectical and historical materialism were established, Roth started teaching in the latter, then led by Pavel Apostol, the former student and assistant of Lucian Blaga. Roth graduated in 1949, was proposed for a doctorate in the Soviet Union, but declined in order to remain in Cluj, close to his wife. When he received his doctoral degree in 1962, under the supervision of Tudor Bugnariu, who had been head of the department after Pavel Apostol's public exclusion from the party in 1952, until his transfer to Bucharest in 1957, the political situation had significantly improved. Roth's dissertation reflected the spirit of the post-1956 denunciation of the "personality cult" in the Soviet Union, the full consequences of which had been successfully prevented in political life, but which was increasingly reflected at the level of intellectual discourse. He analyzed the

[41] Andrei Roth, *Opţiunile mele* [My options] (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2014), 92.

[42] While the Jewish population in the other parts of the country might not have been aware of the extent of the pogroms in the annexed territories of Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transnistria, news of the executions in Bucharest and Iaşi appeared in the press. Between 280,000 and 380,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews lost their lives in Romanian administered territories during the war. *Final Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania*, November 11, 2004, www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20080226-romania-commission-holocaust-history.pdf.

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role of collective agency in history, "developing the idea that the course of social changes is decided by the masses of ordinary people and not by the personal qualities of charismatic leaders or their autocratic directives," and argued for the orientation of the social sciences towards everyday life rather than political events.[43]

Kallós and Roth often published together beginning in the 1960s, both in Hungarian and in Romanian, most notably on axiology and ethics, and having both distanced themselves from their religious backgrounds after the war, on issues of scientific atheism. Their approach to historical materialism sought to emancipate it from simply reproducing the classics of Marxism-Leninism or party documents (broadly understood as the task of scientific socialism and party activists), while also guarding against unpredictable revisions, increasingly done in a nationalist key. Concrete sociological research played the crucial role of connecting theory to the social life and the agency of individuals: "the Marxist conception about society develops above all through the generalization of new facts of life and of the revolutionary experience of the popular masses, with which it must maintain its unmediated ties."[44] It was from this perspective that they disagreed with the German economist and sociologist Jürgen Kuczynski, whose article, published in the Soviet Union in 1957, argued for the separation of historical materialism and sociology and effectively opened the debate about the relation between the two among Soviet philosophers and social scientists.[45] Extended to the argument of Radu Florian, this criticism took issue, in particular, with the suggestion that the object of historical materialism are the general laws of society, and not their concrete realization at the level of social realities. For Kallós and Roth,

[43] Roth, *Opţiunile mele*, 227.
[44] Nicolae Kallós and Andrei Roth, "Materialismul istoric ca sociologie marxistă şi comunismul ştiinţific" [Historical materialism as Marxist sociology and scientific communism], *Cercetări filozofice*, no. 5 (1962): 1261.
[45] Michael Voříšek, *The Reform Generation: 1960s Czechoslovak Sociology from a Comparative Perspective* (Prague: Kalich, 2012), 153–56.

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historical materialism could accommodate both concrete empirical research and the specialization of disciplines, while remaining a unified general sociology. Its object were the objective laws of social development, whereas scientific socialism rather dealt with their subjective instantiation by the working class, led by the party. Like Popovici and Trăsnea, they maintained that scientific socialism was the Marxist political science.

In subsequent interventions in the debate, the identity of Marxist sociology and historical materialism remained unquestioned,[46] a resolution shown to be consistent with the synchronous Soviet discussions on the matter.[47] One notable exception to this was Achim Mihu, who reconstructed a reasoning very similar to that of Kallós and Roth, yet nevertheless concluded that historical materialism was in reality contained by the ever-expanding domain of sociology rather than the other way around.[48] In this Mihu followed the Soviet author G. G. Karavaev, who maintained that historical materialism was the philosophical foundation of all social sciences, but could not be identified with either sociology or concrete sociological research. This was an argument for both theoretical (historical materialist) and concrete sociological research to be pursued equally, as well as for the methodological development of separate branches of the social sciences.[49] The latter, in particular, opened the way for the configuration

[46] See I. Nathansohn and P. Dumitrescu, "Cu privire la raportul dintre materialismul istoric şi sociologia marxistă" [On the relation between historical materialism and Marxist sociology], *Cercetări filozofice*, no. 1 (1963): 185–90; Ion Florea, "Cu privire la obiectul materialismului istoric şi al comunismului ştiinţific şi la raportul dintre ele" [On the object of historical materialism and scientific communism and the relation between them], *Cercetări filozofice*, no. 3 (1963): 733–42; H. Uschersohn, "În legătură cu obiectul socialismului ştiinţific" [On the object of scientific socialism], *Cercetări filozofice*, no. 4 (1963): 971–8.

[47] Maria Micu, "Discuţii asupra raportului dintre materialismul istoric şi sociologia marxistă" [Discussions on the relation between historical materialism and Marxist sociology], *Cercetări filozofice*, no. 5 (1963): 1277–80.

[48] Achim Mihu, "Materialismul istoric, socialismul ştiinţific şi sociologia" [Historical materialism, scientific socialism, and sociology], *Cercetări filozofice*, no. 2 (1963): 445–52.

[49] G. G. Karavaev, "Historical Materialism and Concrete Research in Sociology," *Soviet Sociology* 1, no. 2 (1962): 8–9.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

of a new field of expertise in the second half of the 1960s, and further deepened the generational divide in post-Stalinist social sciences.

Born in 1931 in Cluj, Mihu had studied economics in Bucharest and joined the Faculty of Philosophy at the Babeş-Bolyai University at the end of the 1950s. The decade that separated him from the other participants engaged in the debate over sociology and historical materialism, also translated, epistemologically, in the generational gap between the revising of ideological convictions forged in the context of fascism and war, and the rejection of the 1950s intellectual package of postwar Sovietization as either scientifically rudimentary, alien to Romanian culture, or both. Already coming to the fore in the second half of the 1960s in the dividing lines drawn between empirical and theoretical research, and further aggravated by the different opportunities for access to training and expertise in Western Europe and North America in the 1970s, the generational divide will resurface in the cultural debates of the 1980s, under conditions of scarcity and full-fledged national communism.

3. *Socialist consciousness*

Illustrating the extent to which historical materialism and Marxist sociology were mutually constitutive, the topic of the first concrete sociological research in Socialist Romania was "social(ist) consciousness." As an ideological concept, socialist consciousness had a patchy past. References to Marx and Engels were scarce, but it could otherwise be traced back to Lenin's work, in particular *What Is to Be Done* and his distinction between spontaneity and consciousness in the history of the working class.[50] By a simplification of Lenin's argument, social consciousness came to be

[50] For an account of how the centrality of the spontaneity-consciousness dichotomy for the Bolshevik view on the working class was constructed and reproduced in Soviet studies beginning at the end of the

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chiefly identified with the vanguard role of the party, yet after 1956, post-Stalinist Marxist philosophy in the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc swiftly developed it into a separate domain of historical materialist analysis. In relation to social existence, which it reflected, evaluated, and to which it reacted, social consciousness encompassed a variable number of "forms," such as political ideology, law, morals, religion, science, philosophy, and art.[51] Although into the 1980s there was little agreement on not just the components of social consciousness, but more importantly the interrelations between them,[52] Marxist ethics, aesthetics, or philosophy of science could branch out from this theoretical foundation, as early as the late 1950s, into legitimate fields of research.[53]

Ádám Takács has followed, for the case of Hungary, how "socialist consciousness" was abruptly appropriated for official party ideology following the 1956 Revolution and became the flagship ideological term of the Kádár regime over the 1960s and 1970s. The success of the concept was partly due to the fact that it offered a flexible way to mediate between ideological pronouncements and material realities, by prescribing the adequate manner of interpreting and acting upon the contradictions of social life. Moreover, it was able to accommodate both reformist and orthodox views on the role of individual and collective social action under socialism, which played into the regime's penchant for ideological balancing. Beyond the pragmatic advantages of the concept, however, Takács also addressed the devastating conclusions of a large-scale empirical research into the development of socialist consciousness conducted in the

1940s, see Anna Krylova, "Beyond the Spontaneity-Consciousness Paradigm: 'Class Instinct' as a Promising Category of Historical Analysis," *Slavic Review* 62, no. 1 (2003): 1–23.

[51] These were the seven forms of social consciousness as systematized in one of the classic Soviet works on the topic, which was also translated into Romanian. See Vladislav Zhanovich Kelle and Matvei Iakovlevich Kovalzon, *Formele conştiinţei sociale* [The forms of social consciousness] (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1961).

[52] B. A. Grushin, "The Structure and Make-up of Social Consciousness," *Soviet Sociology* 25, no. 1 (1986): 19–22.

[53] For the sake of illustration, Niculae Bellu, Ion Ianoşi, and Angela Botez had successful academic careers in these three domains, respectively.

second half of the 1970s, which suggested that the notion had neither a solid Marxist theoretical basis nor analytical value for social scientific research or normative action. This, Takács argued, revealed the fundamental paradox of ideology, which renders itself ineffective for social life in the very process of drawing itself closer to reality.[54]

Although in Romania "socialist consciousness" never achieved either the currency or the centrality it did in the Hungarian context, in light of Takács's comment of the self-defeating paradox of ideology, I would like to question, in what follows, why the interest in social consciousness coincided in Romania with the beginnings of concrete sociological research. I propose that this endeavor should be read not as an account of the inherent incompatibility between ideology and science, but as the articulation of a post-Stalinist Marxist theoretical alternative to both dogmatic Marxism-Leninism and bourgeois empiricism. In this sense, my focus is not on what it showed to be impossible (as in the Hungarian case—the use of ideological concepts in social scientific research), but on the possibilities for analytical innovation and social intervention that it opened up.

In 1960, the resolution of the Third Congress of the Romanian Workers' Party, with its focus on the tasks of ideological work after the achievement of the material basis for socialism, appeared to encourage research into the "subjective factors" of the transition to communism still ahead. The first theoretical volume to address the issue of social consciousness, published by the Philosophy Institute of the Romanian Academy, responded to the task as early as 1961: beginning with a chapter on the leading role of the party as the main subjective factor in the development of communism, it proceeded to discuss the political, moral, scientific, and aesthetic forms of social consciousness,

[54] Ádám Takács, "'Socialist Consciousness': The Adventures of a Key Term in the Ideological Discourses of the Kádár Regime," lecture held at Central European University, April 2, 2015.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

as well as the development of the socialist consciousness of the peasantry.[55] In spite of highlighting the dialectical relationship between material, objective factors, and subjective factors in the construction of socialism, the volume did not go much beyond laying down the ideological line of the party, reaffirmed that class struggle had now moved into the realm of socialist consciousness. Perhaps the best example is Niculae Bellu's chapter on the role of the working class in the development of a humanist socialist morality, which mapped the profile of revolutionary workers' consciousness. The chapter emphasized workers' dedication to communism and work as illustrated by socialist competition, their spirit of collectivism, as well as the influence of the socialist morality developed through work over other aspects of one's social and private life.

Born in 1916 as Bellu Schor in a Jewish family from Brăila, Niculae Bellu became an antifascist militant and member of the communist party in the interwar period. He studied philosophy in Bucharest starting in 1937, was arrested, imprisoned, and forced to live in hiding because of his antifascist activity, and in the first years after the war held various prominent positions in the cultural field, such as editor-in-chief of one of the main dailies and president of the Cinematography Committee. Marginal politically, after the second half of the 1950s he dedicated himself to the study of moral philosophy, which did not entirely shield him from the repression against members of the interwar illegal communist party.[56] As a representative of what he identified as the "cultural left," in the 1960s and 1970s Bellu worked towards the formulation of a humanist, universal, and non-repressive ethics, which he conceived as a synthesis of Kantian,

[55] Marcel Breazu, ed., *Dezvoltarea conştiinţei socialiste în Republica Populară Română* [The development of socialist consciousness in the Romanian People's Republic] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1961).

[56] Ion Ianoşi recalls that as reader of Bellu's dissertation on socialist morality at the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Academy, he was pressured by an activist from the Propaganda and Agitation Section of the Central Committee to reject it, which he managed to avoid. Ion Ianoşi, *Internaţionala mea: Cronica unei vieţi* [My Internationale: The chronicle of a life] (Iaşi: Polirom, 2012), 387.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Hegelian, and Marxist inspiration.[57] Disengaged from the political realities of the Ceauşescu regime, and in dialogue with the contemporary Marxist humanism of the Praxis school as well as Western non-Marxist humanism, it resembled little the chapter published in the 1961 collective volume on socialist consciousness.

"We were all aware of what the volume was missing," recalls Mihail Cernea, one of the several co-authors. "Facts of life, real people. It is from this that the impulse came to do something different, something new, with different methods, to move out of the sphere of generalities and examine the surrounding reality."[58] The research group from the historical materialism section of the Philosophy Institute which conducted the first empirical sociological research of the working class in Socialist Romania was a mix of first generation postwar social scientists—Mihail Cernea, Gheorghe Chepeş, Honorina Cazacu, —and younger philosophy graduates. Born in 1931 in Iaşi, Mihail Cernea had fled to Bucharest in 1944, his family fearing a new wave of pogroms as the German and Romanian armies were retreating towards Moldova. The experience of the persecution and oppression of the Jewish population by the Antonescu regime was essential for his commitment to social and political change and the pursuit of a more equal social order. Already during high school, and throughout his studies at the Faculty of Philosophy, he worked for the main youth daily, *Scînteia tineretului* (The spark of youth), which offered him the chance to witness the social changes of the early 1950s first hand. In 1954, he left the newspaper to start a doctorate in philosophy at the "A. A. Zhdanov" Higher School of Social Sciences, one of the two party schools established after 1948, which trained cadres for propaganda and party education, and enjoyed the

57 Vasile Morar, "Morala şi stânga culturală: Niculae Bellu" [Morality and the cultural left: Niculae Bellu], in *Morala elementară* [Elementary morals] (Bucharest: Paideia, 2011), 102–3, 109–10.
58 Zoltán Rostás, *Vieţile sociologului: Convorbiri cu profesorul Mihail Cernea* [The lives of the sociologist: Conversations with Professor Mihail Cernea], forthcoming. I would like to thank Prof. Rostás for sharing with me the manuscript of the interview he conducted with Mihail Cernea in 2007.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

prestige of an elitist institution in comparison with the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" University for political activists.[59]

Cernea's dissertation on the topic of contradictions in socialism, however, was rejected for defense in 1958. One year later, Cernea joined the Philosophy Institute of the Romanian Academy, then led by Constantin Ionescu-Gulian, the main force behind the reorganization of philosophical teaching and research during the period of Stalinization. When in 1962 he could finally defend his thesis, under the title of "The Romanian Workers' Party use of the dialectics of social development in the construction of socialism," the "A. A. Zhdanov" Institute had merged with the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Party School, which remained the only party institution of higher education until the end of the 1980s. Published in 1964, Cernea's dissertation grounded theoretically the existence of "non-antagonistic contradictions" under socialism, specifically the class struggle driving the processes of industrialization and collectivization in the 1950s. Extending the analysis of the dialectic development of socialism to the contemporary period, Cernea argued that the main "contradictions" driving development were those between the means of production and the relations of production on the one hand, and social existence and social consciousness on the other.[60]

Cernea's close collaborator, Gheorghe Chepeş, was a concentration camp survivor. In the 1950s, he served as deputy dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Bucharest, and after working as a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy, in 1970 he became head of the newly founded Laboratory for Urban Sociology in Bucharest.[61]

[59] Narcis Popescu, "Propagandă şi satelizare: Şcoala Superioară de Ştiinţe Sociale 'A. A. Jdanov,' 1948–1958" [Propaganda and satelitization: The "A. A. Zhdanov" Higher School of Social Sciences, 1948–1958], *Arhivele Totalitarianismului*, nos. 3–4 (2010): 46.
[60] Mihail Cernea, *Despre dialectica construirii socialismului* [On the dialectics of building socialism] (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1964).
[61] Tismăneanu, *Lumea secretă*, 246.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

With a pronounced empirical orientation, the laboratory contracted studies on the economic, cultural, and social development of Bucharest, and was "the first institution of sociological research tasked with providing information and solutions for the local activities of prognosis, planning, and social decision, as well as urban systematization."[62] The third member of the coordinating team at the Philosophy Institute, Honorina Cazacu, was born in 1921. After graduating from the "A. A. Zhdanov" Higher School of Social Sciences in 1953, she stayed on as a lector in the historical materialism department. Cazacu transferred to the Philosophy Institute in 1960, where she led the historical materialism department before Cernea, while also serving as the secretary of the party organization. In this position, she also strictly oversaw the political content of the concrete sociological studies, which at the beginning of the 1960s was not just methodologically, but also ideologically pioneering. Cazacu is best known for publishing the first large-scale sociological study of social mobility in Socialist Romania, which revealed that the intellectual class tended to reproduce itself and that opportunities for upper social mobility for children of peasants and unskilled workers were steadily decreasing compared to the 1950s.[63]

Cazacu, Cernea, and Chepeş formed an unlikely, yet surprisingly successful research team. Through their political, educational, and professional backgrounds, they represented the multiple, overlapping motivations which went into the relaunching of empirical sociological research: from an interest in the realities of socialist construction to an aspiration to mathematize them to the theoretical and political drive to formulate the progressive laws underlying the new social order. Their first and only collective

[62] Gheorghe Chepeş, "Laboratorul de sociologie urbană al capitalei: organizare şi preocupări" [The urban sociology laboratory of the capital: Organization and activities], *Viitorul social* 1, no. 2 (1972): 379.
[63] The study was the published version of her doctoral dissertation, which she defended in 1974 under the supervision of Alexandru Tănase. See Honorina Cazacu, *Mobilitatea socială* [Social mobility] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1974).

study was an analysis of the socialist consciousness (what they called the "spiritual profile") of the working class in the Bucharest factories "23 August," "Griviţa roşie," and "Semănătoarea." The resulting volume, entitled *The spiritual profile of the working class in socialism* (henceforth *The spiritual profile*), was published in 1964. As detailed by the three authors in the introduction, the team had aimed to cover theoretical, methodological, and analytical issues related to the assimilation of Marxist-Leninist ideology by the working class; workers' professional and technical training as a factor of consciousness; the development of economic thinking among workers; consumption of culture; the struggle between the old and the new in the configuration of workers' moral consciousness; and public opinion.[64] To this end they conducted extensive documentation (which included official party documents, theoretical literature, but also administrative reports, statistics, economic studies, factory newspapers, and transcripts of production meetings), individual interviews, administered questionnaires to what they identified as a representative sample of 700 out of 3,500 workers, and processed the data through manual correlation, apparently following the model of concrete sociological studies conducted in the Soviet Union,[65] but also the methodology of early 1950s American social research.[66] Their aim was both to offer practical recommendations and to integrate the study's conclusions into the theory of historical materialism, most importantly by bringing back into the center of interest social practices (production work, political participation, instruction, and education) and by

[64] Honorina Cazacu, Mihail Cernea, Gheorghe Chepeş, and Constantin Vlad, eds., *Profilul spiritual al clasei muncitoare în socialism* [The spiritual profile of the working class in socialism] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1964).
[65] *Cercetări sociologice* published regularly reviews of theoretical and methodological developments in the field of the social sciences in the Eastern Bloc. See, for instance, Mihail Cernea, "Cercetări sociologice de teren" [Sociological field research], *Cercetări filozofice* 10, no. 6 (1963): 1525–31
[66] Mihail Cernea recalls consulting a textbook by William J. Goode, most probably an edition of William J. Goode and Paul K. Hatt, *Methods in Social Research* (New York: McGrawl-Hill, 1952). See Rostás, *Vieţile sociologului*.

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recovering the agency of the working class. The working class was neither a conglomerate of individual subjects, they agreed, nor "a sum of identical individuals."[67]

The increasing interest in issues of human agency has widely been the mark of post-Stalinist Marxist thought in Central and Eastern Europe. Zhivka Valiavicharska has shown how the single most far-reaching consequence of the Stalinist stabilization of the Marxist-Leninist philosophical canon in the 1920s–30s, in the form of historical and dialectical materialism, was to "skillfully take away political agency from the collective body they were meant to empower, remove human agency from all knowledge production, and establish positivist methodologies of socialist knowledge."[68] Post-Stalinist revisions, she argued, challenged dogmatic Marxism-Leninism exactly on the account of its purging of collective agency from history and of the knowing subject from epistemology. In the case of Bulgaria, social scientists and philosophers who worked towards producing the basis for a "third way" between authoritarian socialism and bourgeois democracy focused on "the youth" as a historical subject whose collective agency was to become the driving force for the transformation of real-existing socialism. In the Romanian context, too, the questions of agency, individual and collective, the possibility of a humanist Marxism, and the democratization of socialist governance are closely intertwined with the revision of the epistemological assumptions of Marxism-Leninism as a science for the study of society. Having established that historical materialism was indeed the Marxist sociology, philosophers and social scientists worked towards the simultaneous reformation of its theoretical and

[67] See also Honorina Cazacu, Mihail Cernea, and Gheorghe Chepeş, "Probleme de metodă în cercetarea sociologică" [Problems of method in sociological research], *Cercerări filozofice*, no. 6 (1963): 1341–61.
[68] Zhivka Venelinova Valiavicharska, "Spectral Socialisms: Marxism-Leninism and the Future of Marxist Thought in Post-Socialist Bulgaria," PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2011, 45.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

methodological assumptions. The case of "social consciousness" captures exactly the beginnings of this double agenda for social and epistemological change.

At the core of the issue of social consciousness stood the Marxist-Leninist model of base and superstructure, and its economic reductionism. The authors of *The spiritual profile* did not challenge directly either the principle of reflection or the preeminence of the material conditions of social existence over the "spiritual" ones. The challenge came, rather, from within this accepted theoretical framework, and entailed producing a set of "mid-range" theoretical caveats. The dialectic relationship between social existence and social consciousness, they argued, was complicated by the dynamics of consciousness itself, particularly the dynamics of spontaneous reflection (the level of social psychology, of feelings, mentalities, habits, prejudices, etc.) and elaborate reflection (the ideological or theoretical level). The chapter on the development of political consciousness is instructive in this regard. Based on individual and aggregated replies to questions regarding the character of industrial work and workers' personal life goals, Honorina Cazacu described the "law-like" process by which workers' emotional, affective responses to changes in social existence are gradually processed into higher-level generalizations, without this affecting each level's relative independence. In spite of the deterministic account of the increasing ideologization of social life, it is clear that the effort was to emancipate "spontaneous consciousness," people's subjectivities, from their supposedly theoretical irrelevance. In the long run, the strategy of theorizing intermediary stages between social realities and the abstract laws of historical materialism would allow Cazacu to question the analytical value of the "law of reflection" itself, and to switch the focus to a functional analysis of social

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

consciousness and its role in the social acquisition of knowledge (as a process of de-alienation), the formation of public opinion, and the creation of spiritual values.[69]

In his chapter on the economic thinking of the working class, Mihail Cernea also stressed the epistemological aspects of the development of socialist consciousness. What kind of knowledge about the economic underpinnings of the socialist society do workers require?, he asked, how do they acquire it?, and to what use is it put? He referred to the same two-level model of spontaneous (common-sense) and theoretical consciousness in order to argue that the historical realities of socialist production demanded not only unsystematic economic knowledge, acquired empirically in the activity of production. Rather, a new structure of economic thinking was required, what he would later call economic consciousness, in order to emancipate workers to their full potential as socialist agents. Cernea's choice of social practices to analyze is telling in this respect, the stress being on collective action such as production meetings, analyses of production plans, socialist competition, or the rationalization commissions. The empirical data collected showed workers' mass participation at these activities, their interest in acquiring an understanding of the overall workings of production and of their place in them, as well as, in large numbers, the wish to discuss the deficiencies in the production process. This certainly fit the image of the working class on its way to creating communism, which allowed Cernea to focus on the point that unlike in capitalism, where the distribution, circulation, and management of information were being perceived as an organizational problem, in socialism they were a "human problem," something to be addressed at the level of "subjective factors." Much like Cazacu, he was working from within the historical materialist framework to bring the

[69] Honorina Cazacu, "Conştiinţa în perspectiva sociologică" [Consciousness from a sociological perspective], *Revista de filozofie* 14, no. 5 (1967): 473–82.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

question of workers' conscious agency into focus and then integrate the ideal of a fully emancipated, knowing subject back into the theoretical vision of the leading role of the working class in the creation of socialism. Cernea did not spell out the full implications of this argument for a vision of democratic, participatory socialism until 1966, in the paper he presented at the Sixth World Congress of Sociology. He had previously proposed a similar line of reasoning with regard to the economic thinking of peasants who joined cooperatives.[70] Economic knowledge and the development of new structures of economic thinking, he argued, were both created by and required for the genuine participation of workers and peasants in the collective leadership of factories and cooperatives.[71]

4. *Dividing lines*

The relaunching of concrete sociological research was by all accounts a key event in the social sciences. Although partial results of the ongoing empirical study of socialist consciousness had recurrently appeared in the main journal for philosophy leading up to 1964, the publication of *The spiritual profile* was widely acknowledged in the scientific, cultural, and party press. As a consequence, the debate on the relationship between historical materialism and Marxist sociology took a new turn, as well. It was the issue of conceptual and theoretical innovation, as illustrated by Mihail Cernea's notion of "economic consciousness," which preoccupied reviewers and brought into focus the epistemological divide between Marxist-Leninist philosophy and empirical

[70] In the case of peasants, who had to otherwise be "convinced" to enter the cooperatives, the development of an economic consciousness was to be the basis for emancipating them to democratic, conscious participation. See Mihail Cernea, "Conştiinţa socialistă şi dezvoltarea noii gândiri economice a țărănimii" [Socialist consciousness and the development of the new economic thinking of the peasantry], *Cercetări filozofice* 9, no. 4 (1962): 909–42.
[71] Mihail Cernea, "Sociologie, psihologie economică şi conştiinţă economică" [Sociology, economic psychology, and economic consciousness], *Revista de filozofie* 14, no. 2 (1967): 163–72.

research, and more generally highlighting the difficulties facing the practice of Marxist sociology.

Marxist philosophers, economists, sociologists, and social psychologists engaged with issues of sociological theory and methodology, drawing, in broad strokes, the main fault lines along which social scientists would stand divided on these issues for the following decade. This situation was institutionalized with the establishment of separate university departments and research centers for sociology beginning in 1965. The fact that the studies conducted by the historical materialism department of the Institute of Philosophy have largely been forgotten from the early history of sociological research in state socialist Romania, generally thought to have coincided with sociology's re-institutionalization, is an indication of precisely how consequential the mid-1960s debates over Marxist theory and scientific method have been in the self-understanding of the discipline.

The first reviews of *The spiritual profile* readily welcomed concrete sociological research, while articulating three interconnected tensions stemming from it. As summarized by the philosopher Niculae Bellu in the introduction to a roundtable discussion about the volume organized by *Revista de filozofie* in 1965, these were: 1) the tension between deductive and inductive methods, which raised the overarching question if theory and concrete sociological research should rather remain separate; 2) the analytical gap between the empirical data investigated and the theoretical conclusions drawn from it, otherwise formulated as a criticism of the instrumental, rather than genuinely productive character of empirical research; and 3) the tension at

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

the very core of the empirical method itself, namely the way in which it conceived the relationship between the researcher and her object of research.[72]

On the first issue, it became apparent that faced with the practice of empirical research, the theoretical consensus which had been previously reached regarding the identity between historical materialism and Marxist sociology no longer held full explanatory power. To be sure, the review of the volume published in *Lupta de clasă*, the theoretical journal of the party, maintained that there was no essential difference between theoretical studies and direct social investigation. The theoreticians of Marxism-Leninism were shown to have all been directly drawing from real life. In this line of reasoning concrete sociological investigation of existing realities was meant to improve the theoretical sophistication of historical materialism, weed out platitudes, and eliminate formalism. Marxist sociology was cast as a non-dogmatic, creative science.[73] Mihail Cernea's concept of "economic consciousness," however, had served as an illustration of the supposed incompatibility of deductive and inductive methods in the research of social realities. A conceptual innovation which stemmed precisely from the creative combination of the two methods, it was criticized by Ion Drăgan, Cernea's former colleague at the Faculty of Philosophy, as both inconsistent with the Marxist theory of the "forms" of social consciousness, and as one of the theoretical conclusions which overstepped what was allowed by the empirical data investigated.[74] In an even more forceful stance, the cultural historian Zigu Ornea argued that economic consciousness was integrated to all other forms of social consciousness, especially the

[72] Niculae Bellu in "Stenograma mesei rotunde în problemele de metodă ale cercetării sociologice concrete" [Transcript of the roundtable on methodological issues of concrete sociological research], *Revista de filozofie* 12, no. 4 (1965): 547–49.
[73] Ion Iordăchel and Petre Beraru, "Aspecte metodice în cercetarea sociologică" [Methodological aspects in sociological research], *Lupta de clasă* 11 (1964): 37–51.
[74] Ion Drăgan, "Profilul spiritual al clasei muncitoare în socialism - recenzie" [The spiritual profile of the working class in socialism - review], *Contemporanul* 26, June 26, 1964.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

political one, and so there was no need for "innovation for the sake of innovation" or for "theoretical inflation." At the same time, he criticized the authors of *The spiritual profile* for having produced not a study of concrete sociology, but a work of historical materialism about the forms of social consciousness in socialism, which sometimes used in its demonstration sociological inquiry, with the implication that the only "scientific" method was the inductive one.[75]

The criticism of the production of theory for its own sake also tied into the emerging language of "efficiency," which highlighted sociology's role in solving problems of scientific governance and responding to "social command."[76] The later studies conducted by the historical materialism section of the Philosophy Institute indeed came closer to this understanding of sociology, as Cernea, Chepeş, and Cazacu coordinated research in factories about the innovators' movement, social integration, workers' attitudes towards modern technology, and the social aspects of workers' productivity. Moreover, the mid-1960s occasioned productive alliances between sociologists and local actors, especially party activists in charge of the campaign for rationalization and the scientific organization of work.

The study of the innovators' movement conducted in Braşov under the coordination of Mihail Cernea in 1964–65 concluded that innovators were underpaid, lacked guidance and administrative support, were held back by over-bureaucratization, and felt demotivated by a lack of results.[77] As Cernea insisted in discussion with local factory managers, engineers, and party activists, what was needed was a radical change in the way innovation was understood, the focus moving from the object of innovation to its

[75] Zigu Ornea, "Stenograma mesei rotunde," 551–3.
[76] Constantin Vlad, "Stenograma mesei rotunde în problemele de metodă ale cercetării sociologice concrete (continuare)," *Revista de filozofie* 12, no. 5 (1965): 696–7.
[77] Mihail Cernea, Maria Micu, and Victoria Dumitrescu, *Mişarea inovatorilor. Studiu sociologic* [The innovators' movement: Sociological study] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1967), 300–21.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

subject—the innovators themselves.[78] The emphasis on the human aspects of work, which was consistent with the humanist Marxist agenda of concrete sociological research, did not exclude, however, the quantification of innovations in terms of economic efficiency. Consequently, party activists could successfully mobilize the critical conclusions of the study to push for an increase in efficiency at the level of factories, and leverage the organizational deficiencies revealed against management's requests for more resources. In an unprecedent move, the propaganda section of the party regional committee in Brașov coordinated a large campaign for the popularization of the results of the sociological study, and also intervened at the factory level for the improvement of the work of innovation, all the while accusing the "'psychological resistance' of some factory managers against sociological research, the routinization manifested as passivity, disinterest, and lack of receptivity, as conservatism."[79] The consequence of the temporary alliance between sociologists and party activists against management also opened up space for professionals, especially engineers, to voice their claims as experts, at times against the interests of the workers themselves. Concrete sociological research made apparent not just the divide between theory and method, but also that between sociological research and social practice.

The second tension which came up in discussions following the publication of *The spiritual profile* was that between empirical data and analytical interpretation. This came to be to a large extent articulated as an issue specific to the inductive, scientific method of sociological investigation, but initially attempts were made to approach it within a Marxist-Leninist epistemological framework. What justified drawing

[78] Dumitru Rujan, "Inovatorii: Un fond de aur ce trebuie valorificat" [Innovators: A gold reserve which must be harnessed], *Drum nou*, 23 July 1968, 2.
[79] Ştefan Antoniu and Dumitru Cristea, "Activitatea de partid în industrie şi cercetarea sociologică" [Party activity in industry and sociological research], *Lupta de clasă* 49, no. 12 (1969): 19.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

conclusions from a bounded sociological inquiry of the part which would stand for the whole of the social reality?, asked Nicolae Kallós and Andrei Roth for the case study of socialist consciousness. The theory of reflection, they argued, which maintained that social existence determines social consciousness, referred to the level of the entire society, but was not necessarily reproduced at the level of smaller-scale social settings (family, school, workplace). Abstracting from local conditions alone could result in faulty generalizations—but there was no need to study a social phenomenon exhaustively as long as one did not consider it independently from the rest of the social reality, for the part mirrored the whole in its essential features.[80]

Ernő Gáll and Ion Aluaş in Cluj articulated a similar position to Kallós and Roth. The two were instrumental in the rehabilitation of sociology in the Hungarian-language magazine *Korunk*, where Gáll served as editor-in-chief between 1957 and 1984, and at the Babeş-Bolyai University, where both taught in the Department of Philosophy. In their review of *The spiritual profile*, they stressed that concrete sociological research, compared to bourgeois empiricism, did not stop at the direct observation of social reality, but sought to process the data obtained into a "concrete concept," understood in its dialectical meaning of "mirroring the organic unity of the essential determining causes of the object researched."[81]

For all commenters, however, beyond the historical materialist resolution of the tension between empirical research and analysis stood the issue of representativity. Gáll and Aluaş, like many others, pointed out that in terms of methodology there was no satisfactory research upon which to model the existing social structure of socialist

[80] Nicolae Kallós and Andrei Roth, "Un studiu sociologic despre profilul spiritual al clasei noastre muncitoare" [A sociological study of the spiritual profile of our working class], *Revista de filozofie* 11, no. 4 (1964): 566–74.
[81] Ernő Gáll and Ion Aluaş, "Cercetări sociologice valoroase" [Valuable sociological research], *Lupta de clasă*, no. 7 (1964): 52–66.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

society, so as to control for the representativity of concrete sociological research on the topic of the socialist consciousness of the working class.[82] Under these circumstances, the solution was to expand both the scale and scope of empirical research, what Mihu Achim described as the extensive and intensive representativity, as well as the "informational representativity" of concrete sociological research.

These categories capture the configuration of a range of analytical exigencies towards empirical sociology in the second half of the 1960s. By extensive representativity, Achim meant the expectation that empirical research would "pattern" a larger social group—in the case of *The spiritual profile*, the working class. This would have required broadening the range of industries researched beyond the most advanced heavy industry in Bucharest, but also controlling for the very diverse social and professional backgrounds of the workers, as well as for the dynamic of their professional and social integration over time.[83] Intensive representativity referred to the thematic breadth of the issues investigated, both in terms of capturing the relationship between classes, and in expanding the focus of interest beyond the activities of production, to cover affective relations and workers' private lives. Finally, the category of informational representativity introduced the question of relevance in the context of world sociology, arguing for a better knowledge of the theoretical developments in the field and for a critical appropriation of the most advanced methodological instruments from bourgeois sociology.[84] In these three understandings, representativity was to largely dominate the

[82] The topic will eventually be taken up, beginning in the early 1970s, by researchers at the Sociology Institute of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences, as will be discussed in chapter three.
[83] These issues will be addressed in the second half of the 1960s and early 1970s in subsequent studies of the sociology of work published by the authors of *The spiritual profile*. See Gheorghe Chepeş, Emanoil Drob, and Maria Popescu, *Aspecte ale integrării profesionale a muncitorilor în industria modernă* [Aspects of workers' professional integration in the modern industry] (Bucharest: Editura politică, 1967); and Mihail Cernea, Maria Popescu, and Haralambie Ene, *Resurse umane ale întreprinderii* [The human resources of the factory] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1971).
[84] Mihu Achim, "Stenograma mesei rotunde," 549–51.

analytical imaginary of sociological research in the following decade. Mihu himself played a key role in this process, introducing sociometry and the American sociology of small groups in Romania.[85] Having received a fellowship to Cornell University as early as 1967, and later teaching in the United States in the mid-1970s, Mihu remained an important source for American sociology throughout the 1970s.

The third and final issue identified based on the early methodological experience with empirical research was the opposition between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge. In its more moderate form, this tension came up time and again in comments about the gap between what the subjects of research said and what they "really believed" and "actually did," which translated in the distinction between investigating the contents of consciousness or merely the information that people had about those contents.[86] Several methodological solutions to this problem were proposed, most notably the preference for observation over self-administered questionnaires in the analysis of social practice, as formulated by Ion Aluaş.[87] Observation, however, had a contested tradition in interwar sociological research, and its scientific credentials would be under constant negotiation in the second half of the 1960s and the early 1970s. In the sociology of mass culture, in particular, even the programmatically anti-elitist method of participatory observation proposed by interwar sociologist Henri Stahl would ultimately be discarded out of a professed mistrust in the transparency of social reality and the truthfulness of social actors, and out of the belief

[85] Mihu Achim, *Sociolometria: Eseu critic* [Sociometry: Critical essay] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1967); Mihu Achim, *Sociologia americană a grupurilor mici* [The American sociology of small groups] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1970).
[86] See Niculae Bellu and M. Lupan in "Stenograma mesei rotunde"; Nicolae Kallós and Andrei Roth, "Un studiu sociologic."
[87] See especially Ion Aluaş in "Stenograma mesei rotunde (continuare)," 695–96.

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that knowledge about the social can be mediated through "scientific," especially statistical methods alone.

The most radical version of the epistemological divide between historical materialism and sociology was articulated by the philosopher Henri Wald, who highlighted the contradiction between sociology's drive to continuously minimize the role of the knowing subject in researching the object on the one hand, and on the other hand historical materialism as a reflection of the unity between subject and object: "general sociology is rigorously de-anthropomorphized, while historical materialism is profoundly humanist."[88] Voiced in the context of a roundtable discussion organized by the historical materialism section of the Institute of Philosophy about the textbook of historical materialism published in 1967, Wald's formulation captured the growing epistemological divide which concrete sociological research had opened (and attempted to bridge) since the early 1960s. Compared to the self-assurance of the early 1960s convergence of historical materialism and Marxist sociology, by 1968 empirical research was perceived as alien to the Marxist humanist project.

Wald was of the same generation as Miklos Kallós. Born in 1920 in Bucharest, he studied at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters before the war, with the social democrat Mircea Florian, who represented a rationalist philosophical alternative to both Nae Ionescu and Lucian Blaga. The son of Jewish small merchants, Wald was expelled from the university during the war, and survived the 1941 Legionnaires' rebellion and Bucharest pogrom protected by friends. He was first introduced to Marxism during forced labor, when he received Franz Mehring's biography of Karl Marx, and joined

[88] Henri Wald in "Manualul de materialism istoric—Masa rotundă din Institutul de filozofie" [The historical materialism textbook: Roundtable at the Institute of Philosophy], *Revista de filozofie* 15, no. 8 (1968): 985.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

the communist party in 1946. Marxist materialist dialectics were at the core of his work as logician, semiotician, and philosopher of language and culture after the war. However, his non-dogmatic understanding and creative use of Marxism, as in his 1959 *Introduction to dialectical logic*,[89] brought him repeated criticism and administrative sanctions, as well as the removal from the university and the Philosophy Institute in 1962.[90] In the 1960s he engaged with issues of general epistemology, reflecting on the methods of contemporary Marxist philosophy, and also published widely on semiotics and the philosophy of language and culture.

The distinctions drawn between the deductive and inductive methods, philosophy and science, and especially theory and practice in the second half of the 1960s will prove to be enduring features of sociology's identity-building as a discipline over the following decade, rendering it more vulnerable to marginalization towards the end of the 1970s. Conversely, the dying out of the debate over historical materialism and Marxist sociology was perceived to be in the detriment of the former's de-dogmatization. Commenting in 1968 on the newly published textbook of historical materialism, which made no mention of sociology, Mihail Cernea noted that although it had been widely accepted by that time that the philosophy of history and general sociology did not perfectly align, including elements of the debate in the textbook would have been instructive for the critical, productive potential of Marxist philosophy.[91] Moreover, in

[89] The book was poorly reviewed in the cultural journal *Contemporanul* on account of contradicting the classics of Marxism-Leninism on the issue of the identity of dialectics, the theory of knowledge, and logic. In a letter to the editor in chief, Wald argued at length against the vulgarization of Lenin and for logic as a separate, legitimate object of research. See Henri Wald to George Ivaşcu, www.privatenotessite.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/scrisoare_ivascu.pdf.

[90] Excerpt from oral history interview conducted in 1999 by Mariana Conovici for the Romanian Broadcasting Company's Center for Oral History, in "Henri Wald—80," *Ramuri*, no. 9 (2000). http://romanianjewish.org/?page_id=661.

[91] It is worth noting, as a counterpart, that the contemporaneous textbook of sociology, which comprised Miron Constantinescu's lectures at the University of Bucharest, did briefly discuss the debates over historical materialism and Marxist sociology. See Miron Constantinescu, *Introducere în sociologie. Note de curs* [Introduction to sociology: lecture notes] (Bucharest: Centrul de Multiplicare al Universităţii din Bucureşti, 1972).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

response to the definition of sociology as a strictly non-philosophical science voiced by a participant at the debate, Cernea went on to suggest that Marxist sociology itself was a creative break from historical materialism, which indeed did not sever its organic ties to philosophy.[92] Yet by 1973, looking back upon the studies conducted at the Institute of Philosophy over the previous decade, Cernea himself described the beginnings of concrete sociological research as a reaction to the dogmatism of Marxist philosophy, conceding that they had not been "consistently sociological" and that at times they relied more on "deduction rather than facts."[93] With this he folded concrete sociological research into the emerging disciplinary history of sociology as a history of its increasing scientifization, glossing over its underlying ideological stakes.

5. *The revision of Marxism-Leninism*

Encouraged by a number of statements against dogmatism in the social sciences made by Nicolae Ceauşescu in the second half of the 1960s, the challenge against Marxism-Leninism took a spectacular turn in 1967–69. At least three strands of criticism were formulated in journals across the country, most notably in *Cronica* (Iaşi), *Tribuna* (Cluj), *Ramuri* (Craiova), and *Contemporanul* (Bucharest). One strand sought to distinguish between science, ideology, and philosophy, and argued in terms of the autonomy of social research and philosophical thought from politics. A second strand of criticism measured Marxism-Leninism against contemporary sociopolitical realities, and formulated the need for both ideological and political change. Finally, a third strand problematized the intellectual sources of Marxism-Leninism, most notably by reference

[92] Mihail Cernea, "Manualul de materialism," 991.
[93] Mihail Cernea, "Cercetări sociologice la Institutul de filozofie al Academiei de Ştiinţe Sociale şi Politice 1962–1972" [Sociological studies at the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences, 1962–1972], *Viitorul social* 2, no. 2 (1973): 481–4.

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to Marx's early "anthropological" writings, and envisaged a socialism with a human face, of Yugoslav or Czechoslovak inspiration. These were not mutually exclusive, but rather different configurations of several elements, most notably epistemic autonomy, political responsibility, and ideological coherence.

Writing in November 1967 on critique in philosophy, Cătălin Zamfir argued that Marxism had been narrowly understood as "a closed and overarching system of thought, entirely opposed to 'non-Marxist' thinking, also seen globally and without differentiation." Yet not all philosophical or sociological thinking was ideological, continued Zamfir, and there were indeed topics which could be approached independently of their sociopolitical context (a concrete example was sociometry), and allow the circulation of ideas across ideological dividing lines. Zamfir concluded that Marxism itself should be understood "not as the only social science, but as a decisive contribution brought by Marx and Marxists to the development of human knowledge." From this perspective, communist social scientists should not isolate themselves, but bring their own contribution to science, broadly defined, and "demonstrate, rather than declare" the superiority of the Marxist theoretical and communist political standpoints.[94] Zamfir's plea against the rigid, dogmatic understanding of Marxism-Leninism required distinguishing ideology from science and relativizing the role of Marxism within the latter, with the aim of allowing a dialogue with non-Marxist literature.

A similar argument applied to intellectual production under socialism led Gabriel Liiceanu to question the very epistemic hegemony of Marxism-Leninism. Of the same generation, Zamfir and Liiceanu both graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy at the

[94] Cătălin Zamfir, "Critica filozofică" [Philosophical critique], *Contemporanul*, 10 November 1967, 8.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

University of Bucharest, in 1962 and 1965, respectively. Whereas Zamfir continued teaching at the university as the assistant of Niculae Bellu, after graduation Liiceanu was hired at the Institute of Philosophy, and in the 1970s found an intellectual mentor in the interwar philosopher Constantin Noica. In an article published at the beginning of 1968, Liiceanu reconstructed the relationship between philosophy and science in the history of thought as one of gradual dissociation. Having taken upon itself topics which science was unable to solve yet, philosophy had been increasingly relieved of obligations with the development of the natural, and later social sciences. Most recently, it had been Marx who delivered historical science and sociology from speculative thought, leaving philosophy without a proper object of research. This, for Liiceanu, was human consciousness. Echoing Henri Wald's distinction between sociology and philosophy, he argued that philosophy was fundamentally human, its role "not simply to reflect the world according to a human order, but to institute this order in reality, populating the world with human essences, *transforming* it."[95] The reference to Marx's Feuerbach theses notwithstanding, Liiceanu's perspective was evidently directed against the identification of Marxist-Leninism with philosophy, instead pleading for the autonomy of science, philosophy, art, and religion as so many "ways of being of the spirit," none of which was subordinated to the other.

As part of the same debate on the scientific character of philosophy, Ileana Mărculescu openly challenged the Marxist-Leninist definition of philosophy as the "science of the most general laws of existence, society, and thinking." She advocated a phenomenological approach to philosophy as the science of "pre-predicative

[95] Gabriel Liiceanu, "Filozofia, o ştiinţă?" [Philosophy—a science?], *Contemporanul*, 26 January 1968, 8.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

thought,"[96] and following Husserl argued that philosophers' main tool was intuition. It is a good indication of the intellectual climate at the end of the 1960s that the articles of Liiceanu, Mărculescu, and others attempting to redefine the object of philosophy beyond Marxism-Leninism were met neither with ideological invectives nor with administrative measures. Although several rebuttals were published, they unanimously welcomed the plurality of opinions and the spirit of theoretical debate.[97] There was indeed an agreement about the need to advance philosophical thinking, yet the way to do that, contended critics, was not by questioning the scientific character of Marxism-Leninism, but by adapting it to the requirements of the present.[98]

This was at the core of the second strand of the revision of Marxism-Leninism, the most widely shared. Marxism, it was repeatedly stated at the end of the 1960s, was an "open" philosophy. As detailed by Constantin Borgeanu, philosophy professor and then vice-dean at the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Academy, "openness" had three different meanings: 1) the irreducibility of Marxist philosophy to an exhaustive set of features or laws—usually an indirect reference to the interpretative violence of previous attempts to systematize it, especially the *Short Course*; 2) its ability to integrate different philosophical conceptions and new ideas, both in the past, as in Marx and Engels's synthesis, and in the present; and 3) its development "in the specific conditions of each country, of each nation, grafting onto its cultural tradition,"[99] which echoed the Romanian Communist Party's policy of relative independence towards the Soviet Union and within the Eastern bloc. The latter pointwould come to dominate the second

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[96] Ileana Mărculescu, "Statutul ştiinţific al filozofiei" [The scientific status of philosophy], *Contemporanul*, 26 January 1968, 9.
[97] Călina Mare, "Polivalenţa filozofiei" [The polyvalence of philosophy], *Contemporanul*, 24 May 1968, 1. 1, 9
[98] Petre Lucaciu, "Da, filozofia marxistă este o ştiinţă!" [Yes, Marxist philosophy is a science!], *Contemporanul*, 8 March 1968, 8. 1, 8
[99] Constantin Borgeanu, "Filozofia marxistă: Coordonate contemporane" [Marxist philosophy: Contemporary coordinates], *Contemporanul*, 1 March 1968, 1, 8.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

half of the 1970s and the 1980s. Yet alternative visions for ideological and political change were also formulated at the end of the 1960s, either internationalist or problematizing the very oppositions between Marxist and non-Marxist, national and international interests.

A good example of the internationalist viewpoint is Valter Roman, who made a strong case for the ability of Marxism-Leninism to respond to contemporary challenges, adapting to what was shaping up as a new, post-industrial global order. Of Hungarian-Jewish descent, Roman had become a member of the communist party in 1931, during his time studying engineering in Brno. He was a volunteer in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War and fled to the Soviet Union in 1937, where he worked as an engineer as well as for the Comintern until his return to Romania in 1945.[100] Roman was marginalized in the early 1950s by Ana Pauker's party faction, yet not purged, and was rehabilitated as a high-ranking member of the nomenklatura under Gheorghiu-Dej, holding important positions in the field of propaganda. Member of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party since 1965, Roman served as director of the publishing house Editura Politică until his death in 1983, facilitating the publication of foreign authors in the highly influential series of contemporary sociopolitical thought, "Idei contemporane."[101]

Beginning at the end of the 1960s, Roman became preoccupied by the issue of the scientific-technological revolution, and at an international conference celebrating 150th birth anniversary of Karl Marx he argued for the need to develop Marxism and "enrich

[100] "Roman Valter (Neulander Ernst)," in *Membrii C.C. al P.C.R., 1945–1989* [Members of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, 1945–89] (Bucharest: Editura enciclopedică, 2004), 515–16.
[101] Vladimit Tismăneanu, "Valter Roman sau gustul amar al conformismului" [Valter Roman or the bitter taste of conformism], in *Arheologia teorii* [The Archeology of terror] (Bucharest: ALLFA, 1996), 186–97.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

it critically, through its confrontation with the new realities in constant and accelerated change, without rejecting these new realities even if they are in contradiction with some old quotes [from Marx and Engels]."[102] A complex theory of the role of science in economic development, he maintained, required the courage to go against the existing theory of forces of production and relations of production, in the spirit of a "creative Marxism" the prototype for which was Lenin himself. The topic of the scientific-technological revolution had broad implications for the theory of the development of capitalism, specifically its ability to adapt to changes in the production forces, and consequently its predicted demise.[103] In addition, it prompted the reevaluation of socialist development, and Romania's move from extensive (industrial) to intensive (science and technology driven) development in particular,[104] a topic which Roman took up in numerous publications throughout the 1970s. For Roman, the revision of Marxism to account for the scientific-technological revolution was not merely an ideological, but a revolutionary, political task. Its scope, as he envisaged it, was international, and for this reason required broad collaboration among Marxist, as well as between Marxist and non-Marxist thinkers.

Speaking at the same international conference as Roman, Tudor Bugnariu openly criticized the economic determinism and the "dogmatism of the period of the cult of personality." In his opinion, this had been responsible for the lack of understanding of Marxism by non-Marxist thinkers, as well as for the lack of dialogue in contemporary thought. Bugnariu synthetized anti-dogmatic, "creative Marxism" in four points: 1) Marxism offered not just a theory and a method for the study of reality, but most

[102] Valter Roman, "Marxismul şi progresul ştiinţific şi tehnic contemporan" [Marxism and the contemporary scientific and technical progress], *Contemporanul*, 10 May 1968, 9.
[103] Valter Roman, "Pentru o teorie marxistă a revoluţiei ştiinţifico-tehnice I" [For a Marxist theory of the scientific-technical revolution I], *Contemporanul*, 3 January 1969, 1, 8.
[104] Valter Roman, "Pentru o teorie marxistă a revoluţiei ştiinţifico-tehnice II: Industrializare—scientizare," *Contemporanul*, 10 January 1969, 8.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

importantly a model of practice for the transformation of society; 2) by applying the dialectical method not just to the study of reality, but to its own theses as well, Marxism contained in itself the possibility of its own renewal, as was the case with overcoming dogmatism; 3) Marxism was both internally coherent and able to integrate contemporary scientific thought, thus reformulating itself without "losing its essence"; 4) ever since its creation, Marxism had been a collective creation, the result of "ever more often, though insufficient" debate within the domain of Marxism and between Marxist and non-Marxist thought, able to avoid unilateral or local constructions and properly reflect the dialectics of the general and particular.[105] In this way Bugnariu mediated between the perspectives of a "national" and an "international" Marxism, emphasizing the universality of the dialectical method itself.

Bugnariu further elaborated his approach to Marxism as an "open philosophy" over several years, spelling out its political as well as epistemological implications. His case is illustrative for the breadth of, as well as the structural limitations to intellectual opposition during belated de-Stalinization, which opened up public discourse for intellectual repositioning, political opposition, and ideological revision at the same time. In April 1968, Bugnariu drafted a detailed response to an inquiry on "The policy of the Romanian Communist Party of attracting, educating, and defending the progressive intelligentsia in 1921–44." Although it is unclear where it originated, the inquiry fit the picture of the party's rapprochement with the intellectuals in the second half of the 1960s, premised on its apparent willingness to correct the mistakes of the past. Bugnariu's answers, which reiterated some of the criticism he had already

[105] Tudor Bugnariu, "Marxismul şi gândirea contemporană" [Marxism and contemporary thought], *Contemporanul*, 3 May 1968, 1, 8.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

formulated in the mid-1950s towards the party's practices in the interwar period, now articulated a convincing anti-Stalinist narrative of his ideological and political past.

In terms of his assimilation of Marxism, he emphasized the role of democratic professors, such as Virgil Bărbat who taught Bukharin's *Historical Materialism*, over that of the rudimentary communist materials distributed among students at the university. His interest in Marxist ideology was further sparked by the achievements of the Soviet Union, popularized in the pro-socialist literature. Then, at the end of 1933, Bugnariu ordered Engels's *Anti-Dühring* at the local bookstore: "It was a revelation; I read it breathlessly on New Year's Eve, while the guests were dancing and enjoying themselves. Reading this book was the moment when I accepted the Marxist worldview, which before I had considered to be but one of many existing philosophical, sociological, and economic conceptions."[106] 1933 was also the year, for Bugnariu, that the Romanian Communist Party proved itself as more than a sectarian movement representing "narrow, foreign interests," namely through its participation in the Griviţa railway strike.

It was after joining the anti-fascist movement that he started studying Marxism systematically: he read Marx, Engels, Lenin, Franz Mehring, Rosa Luxemburg, Trotsky, and Bukharin, then ordered and studied the *Capital*. At the time, he underlined, Stalin was not a "classic," and except for his work on the national problem he had not read anything beyond his reports at the party congresses. Bugnariu further credited Deheleanu with preventing him from falling into the trap of Stalinism by teaching him that "Marxism is a critical philosophy, in the broad and true sense of the word; criticism must act upon its own theses, by permanently confronting them with the reality in

[106] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 4, p. 4.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

constant movement and transformation."[107] He described joining the party in spite of his dislike of the discipline and intellectual rigidity of the organization, yet emphasized that he had never been told to do anything he was not convinced of doing.

Bugnariu had found the Stalinist propaganda in the interwar period demobilizing: especially its underestimation of Hitler's appeal in 1933; the unjustified optimistic outlook on the Spanish Civil War; and the illusions regarding the München Accord. As he dissociated his admiration of socialism in the Soviet Union from Stalin's abusive politics, so did he distinguish his Marxist convictions from the political practice of the Romanian communist party: "Integrating the Marxist worldview was a long process not without contradictions. After I was convinced by the superiority of Marxism compared to any other theory, however, I never had doubts or hesitations from this point of view. I had numerous doubts and hesitations with regard to the way that Marxist principles were translated into life."[108] Bugnariu referred in particular to the party's strict supervision and instrumentalization of the anti-fascist movement, which he believed had been detrimental to the anti-fascist cause.

Not long after he had responded to the inquiry, on April 26, 1968, Bugnariu participated at the municipal meeting of the party activists in Bucharest in which Nicolae Ceauşescu delivered the Central Committee's indictment of the head of the Secret Police and the abuses committed against members of the party who had been wrongfully marginalized, imprisoned, or executed under Gheorghiu-Dej. Notably, Ceauşescu rehabilitated Lucreţiu Pătrăşcanu, purged from the party on accusations of "Titoism" at the end of the 1940s and executed in 1954.[109] In a meeting of the party members of the University

107 Ibid., 12.
108 Ibid., 34.
109 Nicolae Ceauşescu, *Cuvântare la adunarea activului de partid al municipiului Bucureşti* [Speech at the meeting of the party collective of the municipality of Bucharest] (Bucharest: Editura politică, 1968).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

of Bucharest on May 13 dedicated to the decisions of the Central Committee, Bugnariu spoke of the "profound and contradictory" feelings of sadness and hope he had experienced, comparing them with his reaction to the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Following the revelations of Stalin's crimes, he had hoped that the Romanian Communist Party would follow suit, yet realized that the process of reckoning with the consequences of the "personality cult" would not yet happen. Bugnariu agreed that the decisions made by the Central Committee in 1968 were absolutely necessary for the party's dissociation from the crimes committed in its name, yet at the same time maintained that the significance of the revision should go far beyond the belated acts of rehabilitation. He emphasized that is was necessary to "draw all the conclusions regarding the development of internal party democracy, ensuring the free exchange of opinions among communists in all the problems within their organization, eliminating any abuses, respecting socialist legality, and leading to the recovery [însănătoşirea] of our state and party life."[110] This process would also go beyond singular culprits to address systematic abuses committed in all areas of life by submitting to the hierarchical party authority, realizing that the responsibility for such actions belongs "not just to those who make decisions, but also to those who execute them and even to those who tolerate them."[111] Bugnariu's plea was rooted in his own experience of abuse at the University of Bucharest, during the trials organized against students in 1959, but also as recently as 1965, when he had been removed as dean after taking students' side against the party organization in a new round of indictments. The

[110] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 40, "Intervenţie la Adunarea activului de partid al Universităţii din Bucureşti din 13 mai 1968 consacrată dezbaterii hotarârii plenarei C.C. al P.C.R. din 22–25.IV.1968" [Intervention at the meeting of the party collective of the University of Bucharest on 13 May 1968 dedicated to the debate of the decisions of the plenary of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party on 22–25 April 1968], 155. 149–65.
[111] Ibid., 162.

root of the abuses, Bugnariu maintained, was the absence of inner party democracy to curb the power of party and state authorities.

It is in this context that the insistence on the unity between means and ends, and between philosophy and practice should be understood. The Marxism revisionism of the late 1960s, at its most complex, saw intellectual creativity as an indispensable part of the dialectics of political and ideological transformation, integrating both complex individual experience and diverse intellectual sources. The "open character" of Marxist philosophy, modelled after Marx's own creative critical engagement with Hegel, referred to contemporary non-Marxist philosophy as much as to the local philosophical tradition.[112] "The unity between Marxist philosophy and practice implies the transformation of both terms. Since practice is diverse, it follows that Marxist philosophy should also bear the stamp of this diversity, of the talent and genius of those who develop it, it should integrate everything that the culture of the respective nation [popor] brought to the development of thought. One should not turn down dialogue in the name of purity,"[113] Bugnariu wrote all this in 1969, at what was the height of intellectual and political engagement by a reformist intelligentsia with the ideological project of the Ceauşescu regime.

Taking up the challenge to recover the versatility of Marxism and engage in a broad dialogue, the third and most enduring strand of intellectual revisionism formulated at the end of the 1960s was (socialist) humanism. The "humanism" of Marxism, though

[112] An initiative by the journal *Ramuri* to publish a serial "dictionary of philosophy" over the 1967–68 period, coordinated by Grigore Traian Pop, was regularly mired with controversy because of the authors' failings in terms of a systematic ideological critique. One of the more problematic examples was that of philosopher Nae Ionescu, one of the most prominent intellectuals supporting the Iron Guard in the interwar period, whose work in the field of logic was initially introduced without any mention of his political activity. This was rectified in a follow up article, yet nevertheless made it clear that ideological critique could be separated from philosophical commentary. Started in 1969, a second series, dedicated to philosophers from the post-Second World War period, was discontinued after only a few articles.

[113] Tudor Bugnariu, "Caracterul deschis al filozofiei marxiste" [The open character of Marxist philosophy], *Ramuri*, 7 July 1969, 5.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

often evoked at the time, was meant in the most general sense of tending to fundamental human needs such as employment, education, sociability, etc. Yet several authors also sought to formulate a Marxist standpoint engaging in the contemporary debates about humanism, both within and outside the Eastern bloc. Among them, Niculae Bellu participated at the Korčula summer school in 1968 with a paper on the idea of structure in the analysis of morality, published in *Praxis International*, and was the only Romanian philosopher who signed the Korčula declaration against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.[114] In August 1969, he took part at the second Marxist–non-Marxist Humanist Dialogue held in Herzeg Novi, which brought together humanist scholars from across the globe to discuss the topic of "tolerance and revolution." In a joint paper, Bellu and Alexandru Tănase, who had just published his first book on the philosophy of culture, offered an analysis of how revolutionary rupture reflected in the concept of man which was being developed under socialism. A radical break from what they identified as "the myth of man 'good by nature' whose faith would be simply to continue climbing the road of his 'improvement,'"[115] the human condition under socialism had been prefigured by Marx in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844 as "the real appropriation of *human essence* by man and for man."

As envisaged by Bellu and Tănase, the realization of this ideal was not without contradictions:

> For we are not on the soil of a land of promise, where all dehumanizing and alienating phenomena are bound to disappear automatically, but in a world where man—the *object* and the product of a long and dramatic history, thus representing a contradictory spiritual reality—commits himself lucidly and with

[114] Anneli Maier, "The Open Character of Marxism," Radio Free Europe Research Report, 11 November 1969, OSA HU 300-2-7, box 28, folder Philosophy—1969, 5

[115] Niculae Bellu and Alexandru Tănase, "Perspectives and Contradictions in the Contemporary Development of Man," in Paul Kurtz and Svetozar Stojanović, *Tolerance and Revolution: A Marxist–non-Marxist Humanist Dialogue* (Belgrade: Philosophical Society of Serbia, 1970), 77.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

> full awareness to his role as a *creative subject* of a new history. It is this history which will realize the leap out of the empire of necessity into that of liberty.[116]

The insistence on demythologization, the contradictions not just inherited, but inherent to socialism, and the dialectics of civilization and culture represented a significant shift from the glorification of the new socialist man during the period of "high Stalinism." An important source for this shift, as elsewhere in the Eastern bloc, were the early writings of Marx, especially the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, which had been published in Romanian only in 1968, but also *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, of which short excerpts were available since the 1950s. Bellu introduced the latter to the Romanian public for its reflection on the role of the individual in history, and especially the suggestion that "in the era of automatization 'the development of the social individual represents the essential basis of production and wealth.'"[117] Bellu argued that there were crucial theoretical insights in the *Grundrisse* manuscripts for a Marxist humanist theory that would account for the general and the individual, the objective and the subjective, and for necessity and freedom intertwined.[118]

A similar interest in both the contemporary debates on humanism and the intellectual genealogy of the Marxist approach to the human condition was evinced by Ernő Gáll. In the wake of the 1968 Congress of Philosophy in Vienna, Gáll reviewed extensively what he termed "the dialogue of humanisms," a peaceful confrontation of ideas about the progress of mankind, from Althusser's criticism of Marx's "theoretical anti-humanism" to Christian humanism to Heidegger and Sartre. Gáll maintained that

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116 Ibid., 80.

117 Niculae Bellu, "Date noi în teoria umanului" [New information about the theory of the human], *Contemporanul*, 19 September 1969, 8.

118 Niculae Bellu, "Manuscrisul din 1857–58" [The 1857–58 manuscript], *Contemporanul*, 3 October 1969, 8.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Marxism offered the most scientific perspective on the human condition, reconstructing a genealogy of the "promethean ideal" from Greek mythology through the Renaissance, to the Enlightenment, the anthropological writings of Marx, and, partly, historical materialism.[119] Yet in critically considering the humanisms of the twentieth century he emphasized the value of dialogue itself, and specifically the importance of overcoming dogmatism: "Dialogue means […] abandoning the sectarian style of 'ideological struggle,' rejecting global judgements made without the right to appeal, without any nuance. It means giving up the belief and the method which by default label as anti-progressive, unscientific, and anti-humanist any non-Marxist approaches."[120] Originally published in the cultural journal *Korunk*, where he was editor-in-chief, the article is representative for the anti-dogmatic line Gáll had been gradually promoting since the late 1950s, and very much an indictment of his own ideological intransigence in the past. In his autobiographical essays published in the 1970s, he reflected on the intellectual conversion of his generation to Stalinism in the 1940s and on the dogmatism of the 1950s, in what was one of the very rare self-critical accounts before 1989, and, in his own words, the true measure of his fidelity towards the "essence of Marxism," its creative character. "Self-revision," Gáll argued, "was (and remains) the decisive and indispensable condition of my spiritual and moral evolution, of my human integrity."[121]

Born in 1917 in Oradea in a family of intellectuals, Gáll became active in the antifascist student movement during his studies in law in Cluj, and joined MADOSZ (Magyar Dolgozók Országos Szövetsége or Union of Hungarian Workers in Romania) to organize against the extreme rightwing. He was sent to forced labor during the war and

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[119] Ernő Gáll, *Idealul prometeic* [The promethean ideal] (Bucharest: Editura politică, 1970).
[120] Ernő Gáll, "Dialogul umanismelor" [The dialogue of humanisms], *Tribuna*, 14 November 1968, 1. 1–2
[121] Ernő Gáll, "Bilanţ provizoriu" [Provisional balance sheet], in *Dimensiunile convieţuirii: Studii despre naţiune şi naţionalitate* [Dimensions of coexistence: Studies about nation and nationality], trans. by Francisc Pap (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1978), 426.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

survived Buchenwald, while the members of his family lost their lives in Auschwitz. Having studied philosophy, in 1948 Gáll became lecturer at the Bolyai University, and for the following decade published prolifically in the Hungarian-language press, closely following the official party line. He served as editor-in-chief of *Korunk* since its relaunching in 1957, and contributed to the gradual de-Stalinization of Transylvanian Hungarian culture and social science, to oppose, in the 1970s and 1980s, the rising nationalism of the Ceauşescu regime.

It was the self-reflexive moment of a generation of intellectuals defined by an eclectic interwar Marxist theoretical (self-)education, the political experience of antifascist organization and postwar socialist construction, and the ideological commitment to socialism as the most humane form of social organization—a commitment forged in the context of fascism, war, and the Holocaust—which occasioned at the end of the 1960s the bid for epistemological revision and the political democratization of socialism.

6. *Individual and society*

The tightening of party control over the production of ideology, already prefigured as Marxism revisionism was being articulated, forcefully marked the beginning of the 1970s. Yet the discussions opened in the early 1960s over the Marxist approach to the social, and the ideas of "open philosophy" and humanism did produce a strand of philosophical thought on the role of individuals as actors of social change which traversed the 1970s, and was parallel to the empirical approaches to the social. "It is often remarked by Marxist and non-Marxist thinkers," wrote Radu Florian in 1969, revisiting the debate over the relationship between historical materialism, scientific socialism, and sociology in which he had inadvertently become the object of all-around

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

criticism at the beginning of the decade, “that any progress, however small, in the knowledge of social phenomena is preferable to the endless and unfortunately unresolved discussion of the object of sociology.”[122] Florian was of a different opinion. According to him, it had been the very confusion within historical materialism between Marxist philosophy and the study of particular phenomena that prevented the proper development of specialized sciences for the knowledge of complex contemporary social systems, while at the same time rendering historical materialism eclectic and underconceptualized; not agreeing on the object of sociology and its relation to that of historical materialism would have similarly grave consequences.

What should one make of this warning, at a time when sociological research was already developing independently of philosophical inquiry, and the revision of Marxism-Leninism was openly discussed? On the one hand, Florian was writing from the experience of scientific socialism, a discipline which he believed had long been unduly subordinated by historical materialism. On the other hand, and beyond the boundary making between different disciplines, the role of post-Stalinist Marxism-Leninism—weather it was called Marxist sociology or scientific socialism—was to create a conceptual system which would reflect the social realities of socialism. It was this task, and not just the configuration of a specific discipline, which required agreement among social scientists.

Although the need for conceptual innovation was taken up in different forms in the late 1960s and 1970s, one of the most spectacular discursive changes brought by post-Stalinist Marxism-Leninism was the development of what Anna Krylova termed, for the Soviet context, the post-Bolshevik discourse on the modern socialist individual.

[122] Florian, *Reflecții asupra filozofiei*, 177.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Unlike collectivism, it aimed not to merge, but "to 'connect' (that is, relate) individual predispositions and goals with the social good."[123] In this last section of the chapter, I track the articulation of the core issue of the individual, their relationship to society, and their agency in history across various branches of philosophy, reflecting the coagulation of a Marxist humanist approach to the social at the turn of the 1970s.

At the beginning of the 1960s, discourses on collectivism stemming from the 1950s experience of postwar reconstruction coupled with the building of socialism coexisted with an emerging strand problematizing the very relationship between individual and society. A typical article on "collectivism" would begin by quoting Karl Marx on the human essence as the sum of social relations; continue by recapitulating the historical succession of social arrangements, from primitive communism to capitalism, which organized social relations as they emerged in the process of labor; would define collectivism in opposition to the bourgeois individualism at the core of capitalism; and would identify it as the main organizing principle under socialism and the coming communist society. Collectivism, beyond the occasional contradictions, reflected the identity between individual and collective interests. The imaginary was that of workers' brigades, capable of self-regulating—individual achievement was celebrated, but when leading to individualism it would be curbed back by the brigade itself, as an enforcer and enactor of the moral imperative of collectivism.[124]

Yet it was exactly from a moral perspective that this discourse was also problematized: "Which are the moral duties of the individual towards society and of society towards the individual? What is the relationship between social and individual interests? What

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[123] Krylova, "Soviet Modernity," 171.

[124] C. Buzdugan, "Principiul colectivismului în socialism şi comunism" [The principle of collectivism in socialism and communism], *Cercetări filozofice* 9, no. 2 (1962): 305–319.

are the ethical aspects of the issue of the relationship between social determinism and individual freedom of action?"[125] Asking these questions in 1963, Nicolae Kallós and Andrei Roth still defined social relations in socialism mainly in contrast to the capitalist social order. In their 1968 volume *Axiology and ethics*, however, it was not just capitalism, but also collectivism against which the relationship between individual and society was measured. Kallós and Roth established axiology, the study of the meaning and values of life, on Marxist humanist grounds, informed especially by the anthropological concerns of the early works of Marx and Engels. "Society is never a simple sum of the individuals that are part of it," they wrote on the Marxist conception of the relationship between individual and society, "but the organic whole of the social *relationships* between individuals."[126] At the same time, they argued that the individual was not simply the result of the social relationships in which one was embedded, but also relatively independent of them. This independence was "the foundation of one's existence as a moral being and as an axiological subject," capable both of creating values and assimilating the values created and circulated in society.[127] In this way they restated both individual freedom within the constraints of the social conditions of one's existence, and the need for axiology to study not just societal values, but also the values of concrete individuals, as both the object of social relations and the subject which creates them. In his later work, Andrei Roth further expanded the issue of the relationship between individual and society to include aspects of generational differentiation, as well as the topic much-debated in the 1970s: how leadership related to individual social action.[128]

[125] Nicolae Kallós and Andrei Roth, "Societatea şi individul" [Society and the individual], *Cercetări filozofice*, no. 5 (1963): 1242.
[126] Nicolae Kallós and Andrei Roth, *Axiologie şi etică* [Axiology and ethics] (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1968), 37.
[127] Ibid., 39–40.
[128] Andrei Roth, *Individ şi societate* [Individual and society] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1986).

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Investment in the study and further elaboration of theories of action at the end of the 1960s was also grounded in Marxist humanist concerns. Individual agency was recovered as a legitimate topic of research on the basis of a rereading of Marx's early works as an intellectual source for the dialectic view of the individual as the agent and the product of action. The inspiration for this rereading in a humanist key was the Polish philosopher Adam Schaff, whose studies, first in French and then in Romanian translation, were widely available to social scientists in Romania.[129] Another strand of literature mobilized in contemporary discussions of the theory of action was Polish praxeology, in particular the work of Tadeusz Kotarbiński. His theory of effective action was constructed as a Marxist humanist alternative to Talcott Parsons's, which was at the peak of its popularity in Western social science in the 1960s. While both theories were shown to originate from concerns specific to the late 1930s, such as economic management, the optimization of production and administrative work, and explaining individual behavior,[130] Kotarbiński's model was preferred because of his choice of the agent as the central term of praxis.[131] Theories of action built both into analyses of political action and ideology, and, in the 1970s, into the burgeoning literature on scientific management, alongside insights from political sociology, economic cybernetics, and the theory of decision.

The 1971 historical materialism textbook compiled by the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Bucharest under the coordination of Paul Popovici also included a

[129] A symposium on the theory of action organized in 1969 by the Faculty of Philosophy at the Polytechnic Institute in Bucharest gathered Romanian researchers in the field of praxeology. For a typical account of the Marxist dialectic between individual and society, see Ioana Smirnov, "Aspecte ale teoriei acţiunii la Karl Marx" [Aspects of the theory of action in Karl Marx's work], *Forum ştiinţe sociale* 1 (1969): 13–20.

[130] Cornel Popa, "Teoria acţiunii şi logica deontică" [The theory of action and deontic logic], *Forum ştiinţe sociale*, no. 1 (1969): 57–72.

[131] Ion Tudosescu, "Praxeologie şi determinism" [Praxeology and determinism], *Forum ştiinţe sociale*, no. 1 (1969): 33–56.

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separate chapter on the relationship between individual and society. Opening with the same quote from Marx on the human essence as the sum of social relations, it argued that beyond the Marxist philosophical breakthrough of the social nature of man, the relationship between individual and society was anything but self-evident. To the contrary, it had been a main topic of reflection for Marx himself, in his early works on alienation,[132] and was shaping up as the central issue of socialist humanism, an ideology of humane forms of social organization; self-emancipation and control over one's own social life; conscious, participatory action; and the scientific investigation of society.[133]

It was not just ideological de-dogmatization, but the very practice of building socialism which occasioned the re-framing of the relationship between individual and society. Featuring the usual mix of quotations from Marx and Engels, a critique of capitalist social relations, references to recent party documents, and a descriptive/prescriptive analysis of existing social realities, Radu Florian put forward a vision of socialist humanism based on the elimination of social and individual alienation, the free association of individuals, the democratic functioning of politics, and the establishing of a social contract which ensured the pursuit of both social progress and the satisfaction of individual interests. Despite the contradictions inherent in any historical development, Florian argued, what socialist society was striving for was "the development of the individual as an aim in itself." This marked a change in emphasis from previous discussions of the dialectic relationship between individual and society, with the explicit expectation that the latter would be restructured for the benefit of the former. Scientific advancement, in particular, the topic of increasing reflection in

[132] A translation of Marx and Engel's early works which included the "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844" was published in Romania in 1968. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Scrieri din tinereţe* [Youth writings] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1968).
[133] Cătălin Zamfir, "Individul uman. Relaţia sa cu societatea" [The human individual: His relationship with society], in *Materialism istoric*, 1:217–29.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

theories of post-industrial society/scientific-technological revolution, would be oriented for the benefit, and not further alienation, of the individual.[134]

The fate of Marxism humanism was sealed by the end of the 1970s by the gradual edging out of the political and existential stakes of the generation which had invested in its formulation. The insistence on dialogue and creativity in the development of Marxism had mirrored individual practices of self-reflection as well as modelled a more democratic intellectual and political life. As the debate died out and became theoretically irrelevant for a generation of researchers trained abroad in the 1970s, the hermeneutical, ethical, and political dimensions of Marxism humanism were decoupled. When in 1978 Mihu Achim published his volume on the issue of the "human essence" in Marxism, the most detailed reconstruction of the philosophical thought of Marx and Engels on the topic published in Socialist Romania, he prefaced it with the observation that one of the main obstacles in clarifying the issue was the unmanageable proliferation of literature on the topic following the publication of the *Paris Manuscripts*.

"Human essence is the keyword of Marxism in its entirety,"[135] Mihu insisted—an indication of the extent of the revision of Marxism-Leninism which had taken place over the previous two decades, and simultaneously the most striking sign of its de-politicization. Going back to the texts of Marx and Engels in an explicit attempt to offer a hermeneutics distinct from both their later interpretation—from Lenin to contemporaneous "Marxistological" commentary—and their appropriation in party documents, Mihu brought together their scattered writings on the relationship between

[134] Radu Florian, "Societate şi individ în socialism" [Society and individual in socialism], in *Procese definitorii ale dezvoltării societăţii socialiste* [Defining processes of the development of the socialist society] (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1975), 116–35.
[135] Mihu Achim, *Marxism şi esenţa umană* [Marxism and the human essence] (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1978), 6.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

individual and society. Referred to in the future tense throughout the chapter that he dedicated to the issue, the individual in the communist society, as posited by Marx and Engels, was endowed with self-consciousness, the awareness of his social nature educated alongside changes in the objective circumstances of his existence. It was an individual entirely free to manifest and cultivate one's own self through work, who nevertheless understood that authority was made necessary by the complexity and division of labor. Mihu offered a careful, detailed, and dispassionate textual reconstruction, which conceded to practice nothing more than a concluding reference to the dialectic relationship between individual and society, and between Marxist humanism and communism.[136] Mihu's textual hermeneutical approach closed the circle of revisionist Marxist thought which had been opened in the early 1960s by laying down the theoretical basis of what had become, through its extensive appropriation, the new Marxist dogma of "socialist humanism." In the 1980s, he dedicated himself to cultural criticism, formulating a "national Marxist" alternative to Stalinism, most notably in the debates surrounding the figure of the interwar philosopher Lucian Blaga.[137]

7. Conclusions

By the end of the 1970s it was becoming clear that the same logic which inspired the articulation of various strands of Marxism revisionism could also be used for the marginalization of Marxist philosophy itself. In response to Eurocommunism and especially the decision of the Communist Party of Spain to drop Marxism-Leninism from its name so as to mark a break with Stalinist ideology, in 1978 Nicolae Ceaușescu took the opportunity to reaffirm each communist party's right to define its own identity,

[136] See the subchapter "Individ-societate" [Individual-society], in Idem, 140–50.
[137] As masterfully reconstructed in Verdery, *National Ideology*, 151–55.

as well as to develop "scientific socialism" independently. Scientific socialism, he argued echoing the core arguments of Marxist revisionism, though created by Marx and Engels and further elaborated by Lenin, "was not a closed doctrine, set once and for all."[138] Not long thereafter, Bugnariu noted bitterly in his diary,

> pressures were made in the field of ideology to remove from our publications, from textbooks and from university and high school curricula the terms "Marxism, Marxist," and replace them with "dialectical and historical materialism," and even "scientific socialism." The one who launched this action does not know that the attributes of "diamat" [and "hismat"] given to Marxist thought are the creation of Bukharin, nor that Marxist philosophy is not identical with "scientific socialism."[139]

This was an exceptionally crude end, indeed, to a debate carried out for almost two decades, yet it was not devoid of its own dialectical irony. It had been against the identification of Marxist sociology with scientific socialism that Marxist philosophers rallied at the beginning of the 1960s, in an attempt to dissociate social philosophy from the political practice of the construction of socialism. Yet as demonstrated by concrete sociological research, historical materialism was ultimately unable to accommodate empirical and theoretical research, giving way to a number of increasingly independent disciplines, most notably sociology and political science. These broke down into discrete tasks the object of scientific socialism as it had been originally envisaged by Radu Florian. His warning at the end of the 1960s proved ominous, as on the one hand Marxism revisionism lacked the language to formulate its political stakes, and on the other hand the Marxism humanism of the 1970s developed independently of social

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[138] Nicolae Ceaușescu, "Expunere la ședința activului central de partid și de stat" [Presentation at the meeting of the central party and state collective], in *România pe drumul construirii societății multilateral dezvoltate*, vol. 16 (Bucharest: Editura politică, 1979), 537–38.
[139] Tudor Bugnariu, "Diary, 8 August 1978–31 December 1978," 109.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

engineering. What Florian, as a student of Gramsci, must have intuited, was that the lack of consensus would prevent effective political action.

Yet this was not simply about intellectuals agreeing among each other, but as formulated by Gramsci in a little-known article introduced by Florian, about the party's ability to create consensus among its own ranks through dialogue and tolerance, rather than administrative means.[140] In as much as this seemed possible at the end of the 1960s, the consensus was both selective and short lived. The ethos of Marxism revisionism was gradually hollowed out by its identification with the "creative political thought" of Nicolae Ceauşescu. It had become so hegemonic by the second half of the 1970s, that it was systematized as the "Ceauşescu doctrine" in the 1977 *Concise encyclopedia of politology* by none others than Nicolae Kallós and Ovidiu Trăsnea.[141]

Within a decade, the intellectual and existential stakes had profoundly shifted, as the case of Kallós illustrates. Throughout the 1970s, he ritualistically signed celebratory articles about the political thought of Nicolae Ceauşescu, an obligation which undoubtably served its purpose in navigating the unpredictable consequences of de-Stalinization for those who had held prominent positions in the 1950s. This did not protect him from being put under surveillance, in the 1980s, for "Hungarian nationalist attitudes." By the end of the decade, Stalinism had successfully been re-connoted as anti-nationalism, as illustrated by a report on Kallós submitted to the secret police, most probably by a younger colleague from the Faculty of Philosophy. The source described Kallós as a promoter of "the old model of socialism," who as a member of a minority group would never accept, in spite of what his publications might suggest, the changing

[140] Radu Florian, *Antonio Gramsci*, 161–62.
[141] See "Doctrina Ceauşescu," in *Mica enciclopedie de politologie* [The concise encyclopedia of politology] (Bucharest: Editura ştiinţifică, 1977).

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role of the nation under socialism after 1965. Consequently, the source warned that Kallós, who had been put in charge of compiling a new textbook of historical and dialectical materialism, would be the wrong person to set the tone in such an important field, a suggestion that the officer in charge of Kallós's surveillance dutifully acted upon.[142]

It was at the level of individual self-reflection that the dialectical synthesis of the political and epistemological tasks of Marxism revisionism was achieved. For Bugnariu, anti-Stalinism remained central to his self-understanding into the late 1970s:

> Without boasting, I am nevertheless the first (and I believe, the only one) of my generation who condemned Stalinism and did not hold back from expressing my condemnation, at a time when this constituted a harshly criticized "heresy." And I did it not from a Trotskyist position, as some did in that period, but because I realized that socialism cannot be built with means hostile to socialism, without respecting the Marxist principle of the dialectical unity between means and ends, between words and deeds in the activity of the communist party.[143]

Alienated from both the resurgent nationalism and what he called the "apologetics" of public intellectuals, he published very little in the 1970s. Yet in the 1980s his writings circulated in samizdat during the cultural debates surrounding the interwar philosopher Lucian Blaga, who was his father in law. Most notably, Bugnariu reacted against what he perceived as Achim Mihu's "thinly veiled antisemitic and anti-Hungarian sentiments"[144] in his account of the removal of Blaga from the university in 1948. Bugnariu's opposition to the instrumentalization of anti-Stalinism for the purposes of national communism was but the last instantiation of what he saw as an individual responsibility at self-reflection and a sociological responsibility to understand the sociohistorical context of the past.

[142] CNSAS, file I 264538 (Kallos Nicolae), vol. II, 13–32.
[143] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 44/V, p. 180.
[144] Bugnariu's rebuttal is summarized in Verdery, *National Ideology*, 154–55.

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Bugnariu passed away in 1988, yet others, like Radu Florian, Niculae Bellu, Henri Wald, or Ernő Gáll have also had to navigate the post-socialist period, and maintained Marxist or leftist positions within an emerging hegemonic anti-communist discourse. This was premised on the dissociation of the political practice of the Romanian Communist Party from Marxism and the ideals of the left, the final dialectical synthesis of a generation which embodied the intellectual and political contradictions of Marxism in the long twentieth century.

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Chapter 2. Social theory and "everyday Marxism-Leninism"

The leading role of the working class, social homogenization, the multilaterally developed socialist society: the social imaginary of everyday Marxism-Leninism from the second half of the 1960s was dominated by intuitive, powerful catchphrases. Originating in party documents, elucidated in programmatic articles, debated, researched, and entrenched even by sheer repetition alone, they have come to stand for, now emptied of all meaning, political power as performed through language. Maintaining that the formulations of concepts about the social can indeed be interpreted as performative speech acts, in this chapter I nevertheless aim to expand both the cast of performers beyond the high-ranking party members, and the concept of political power beyond the capacity for coercion. In analyzing the work of social scientists who dedicated their careers to the theorization and research of topics stemming from everyday Marxist-Leninist social thought, I argue that they were neither merely understudies parroting power, nor oblivious regarding the complexity of the performance, and of their place in it.

I begin by detailing how, starting in the early 1960s, new intellectual alliances made possible the articulation of a bid for sociology that synthetized technocratic and democratic elements—with sociology imagined as the locus both for the recovery of interwar expertise and the democratization of policy-making. As the path not taken, this nevertheless illustrates how the boundaries of scientific knowledge about the social were drawn with a keen understanding of the limitations of and opportunities within institutional structures, including the dynamic between political power and expertise. The Center for Sociological Research, established in 1966, will figure as the locus of what I analyze, in the context of increased scientific cooperation in the 1970s, both

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within the Eastern bloc and across the East–West divide, as a distinct strand of research, which I identify as "Marxist-Leninist sociology." The use of inverted commas is not meant to signal, as is often the case, the patchy credentials of either the Marxism-Leninism or the sociology in this formula. The intellectual sources of Romanian postwar Marxism-Leninism, as discussed in the previous chapter, were indeed self-limiting. Yet within these limitations more was possible than what is allowed by the conclusion that Marxist critique in Socialist Romania was sporadic and mostly inconsequential compared to the rest of the Eastern bloc.[1] As for sociology, it depended for methodological know-how on chance transfers via either the traditional scientific cooperation networks (France, and after 1945 the Soviet Union) or, beginning in the 1960s, the US exchange programs (Ford Foundation and IREX). This chapter nevertheless argues that "Marxist-Leninist sociology" should be understood as more than a label for supposedly unsophisticated social science. Rather, it represented a clearly distinguishable strand of knowledge, resulting from the specific articulation of institutional arrangements, epistemological interests, and methodological instruments in the 1970s and 1980s.

Institutionally, Marxist-Leninist sociology developed not at the university but within the research institutes of the academy. This was not the consequence of any clear-cut distinction between teaching and research; on the contrary, as will be shown in the next chapter, empirical research was considered an effective pedagogical tool. Unlike the university, however, the academy was closely embedded not just in the national system of scientific planning, but also the regional scientific network which formulated, beginning in the 1970s, the project of a specifically Marxist sociology in the Eastern

[1] Vladimir Tismăneanu, "From Arrogance to Irrelevance: Avatars of Marxism in Romania," in Raymond Taras, ed., *The Road to Disillusionment: From Critical Marxism to Postcommunism in Eastern Europe* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), 135–50.

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bloc. This relied on the participation of sociologists at regular meetings, which could be facilitated through the academy alone. Epistemologically, Marxist-Leninist sociology was primarily invested in the development of theory, which was often defined against bourgeois ideology but also reflected the tension between local requirements, as formulated by party documents and translated into research plans, and the regional attempt to produce a common theoretical platform. In terms of methodology, Marxist-Leninist sociology relied on large, random samples (often with an interest in their representativity), surveyed mostly through self-administered questionnaires. The data was usually processed through simple, computer-assisted statistical analysis. This approach, based on expertise developed in statistical economics, particularly population surveys, suited the elaboration of relatively uncontroversial research hypotheses, and at the same time ensured that data could be used in transnational comparative studies.

In this chapter I detail the institutional and epistemic setup in which Marxist-Leninist sociology developed in the 1970s. By following the social structure research of a group of sociologists from the Center for Sociology of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences in the context of Eastern bloc scientific cooperation, I show how theoretical positions negotiated local, regional, and international epistemic constraints. Finally, I analyze how researchers navigated the 1980s "qualitative turn" in Marxist-Leninist sociology, and how the ideal of a fundamentally egalitarian society fared against evidence of social inequalities either perpetuated by or specifically produced under state socialism.

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1. *A path not taken*

The first attempts to institutionalize sociology separately from other social sciences date from the beginning of the 1960s, with the plan to establish a center for concrete sociological research at the Academy of the Romanian People's Republic. The main organizing drive behind it was Tudor Bugnariu, who sought to coagulate a research team and to push the project through bureaucratically. Yet the original proposal belonged to Traian Herseni, a gifted sociologist with a very complicated political past. The unlikely collaboration between the two represented the most elaborate attempt to formulate a technocratic challenge to real existing socialism at the beginning of the 1960s, as much as its failure is indicative of the academic establishment's resilience to claims of apolitical expertise.

Traian Herseni was a close collaborator of Dimitire Gusti, and one of the most prominent members of the Bucharest Sociological School who ended up joining the Iron Guard. Born in 1907, he graduated from the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy in Bucharest, continued his studies for a year in Berlin, and in 1934 obtained his doctoral degree with a dissertation on "Social reality: An attempt at regional ontology." This reflected his interest in social philosophy, which he developed throughout the main monographic campaigns of 1927–31, as "the closest interpreter" of Gusti's theoretical model.[2] Herseni was a prolific writer, publishing on pastoral organization, rural social institutions and social categories, as well as sociological theory and methodology. At the time, he also contributed to left-wing magazines such as *Stânga*, describing his philosophical and political orientation, in 1933, as: "I am not a Marxist and I am not a

[2] Henri H. Stahl, "Traian Herseni (1907–1980). O evocare" [Traian Herseni (1907–1980): An evocation], *Viitorul social* 9, no. 4 (1980): 700–701.

communist, however I am on the left."[3] He saw his "spiritualist philosophy" and commitment to cultural and spiritual development meet social democracy in the belief that obstacles to collective edification, such as economic inequality and class struggle, must be overcome. In the second half of the 1930s, however, his affinities rested firmly with the Iron Guard project of spiritual regeneration. He joined the movement in 1936 and published two widely circulated pamphlets urging workers and peasants to the legionnaire cause for the spiritual delivery of the Romanian nation from its demise at the hands of political parties and foreign interests (Jewish and communist).[4] He further rose to prominence as secretary general in the Ministry of Education and Culture as the Iron Guard took power in 1940, under the leadership of Ion Antonescu. Herseni's propaganda articles in *Cuvântul* and his radio speeches at the time, based on which he was convicted to four years in prison in 1951, showed admiration towards racial science as elaborated in Nazi Germany, praised the leaders of the Iron Guard, and supported anti-Semitic and anti-Roma social selection in Romania.[5] Following the assassination of historian Nicolae Iorga and the Legionnaire Rebellion in 1941, Herseni publicly resigned from the Iron Guard, yet continued to serve in the Antonescu government and was sent to Odessa as the cultural administrator of the newly annexed territory in 1941–43.

After the war, Herseni continued teaching sociology at the university until 1948, and worked at the Institute for Public Hygiene as a researcher. After serving his prison sentence, he was hired at the Institute of Psychology of the Romanian Academy, initially in low-ranking positions such as librarian. He dedicated himself to the study of

[3] Apud Zigu Ornea, *Anii treizeci: Extrema dreaptă românească* [The thirties: The Romanian extreme right] (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 2015), 143.
[4] Traian Herseni, *Mişcarea legionară şi tărănimea* [The legionnaire movement and the peasantry] (Bucharest, 1937).
[5] CNSAS, file P 000206 (Traian Herseni), "Rechizitor de urmărire no. 220" [Indictment of posecution no. 220], 114–15.

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Marxism-Leninism, and by the end of the 1950s became a close collaborator of the prominent psychologist Mihai Ralea, with whom he published, under pseudonym, the *Sociology of success* in 1962. It was Ralea who vouched for Herseni, in May 1963, to bring to the attention of the Section for Philosophical, Economic, and Juridical Studies of the Academy the proposal to establish a center for concrete sociological research.

Much of the empirical research conducted in the postwar period, argued Herseni in his proposal, had originated from the internal logic of scientific preoccupations, and from the needs of scientists themselves. In contrast, concrete sociological research would stem from the needs of social reality. Herseni envisaged concrete sociology as a "*true science of social engineering*," which would provide "specialized, collective scientific counsel for the construction of socialism and communism in our country."[6] The main tasks of the center would be to identify the most important social problems, formulate them scientifically, and bring them to the attention of the party and/or state institutions. If these were not equipped to solve them, sociologists would also formulate the most efficient solutions, and in case these received approval but required technical competencies which the party or state organs did not possess, then they would also be in charge of implementing them. In addition, the center for sociological research would continuously train cadres from the local administration, elaborate methodological guidelines, supervise the research being conducted, and intervene when local cadres could not carry the research through.

Herseni identified six main areas for concrete sociological research: territorial sociology, agrarian sociology, industrial sociology, commercial sociology, cultural

[6] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45 – Centrul de cercetări sociologice concrete [The center for concrete sociological research], Traian Herseni, "Referat asupra necesităţii creerii Centrului de cercetări sociologice" [Report on the need to establish the Center for sociological research], 108 (italics in original).

sociology, and the study of public opinion.[7] "Provided that in principle the idea was accepted," he concluded his presentation, "there is in our country scientific expertise as of yet unutilized, as well as the necessary number of people to translate it to life."[8] A list of those considered was kept among Tudor Bugnariu's papers, mapping the scattered community of interwar sociologists. It counted around twenty "old cadres" with more or less complicated political backgrounds. Like Herseni, several had been members of the Iron Guard and were marked as "politically compromised" (Cornel Irimie, Leon Ţopa, Romeo Vulcănescu), or had served prison sentences in the 1950s (Gheorghe Retegan, who participated in the research coordinated by Anton Golopenţia to identify the Romanian population East of the Bug River in 1940–44; also imprisoned, Golopenţia died in Jilava in 1951). About as many were current members of the Workers' Party (Marcel Focşa, Mihai Pop, Lucia Apolozan, Petre Bărbulescu, Vasile Caramelea). The main consideration for their selection was their background in sociology and their experience of field research. Henri H. Stahl, one of the closest collaborators of Dimitrie Gusti, and the most sophisticated of the left-wing interwar sociologists coordinating field research with the monographic teams, held marginal research positions after 1948, and had only been able to continue his studies of historical sociology in the second half of the 1950s. Others also held research positions, mostly in the fields of ethnography, folklore, and museography (Petre Stănculescu, Gheorghe Focşa, Marcela Focşa, Vasile Nicolau, Andreescu Xenia, Paul Petrescu, Adrian Negrea, etc.). Of the "new cadres," doubtlessly selected by Tudor Bugnariu, who knew them from the Faculty of Philosophy, Radu Florian, Ludwig Grünberg, and Ovidiu Trăsnea were considered.[9]

[7] Ibid., 109–110.
[8] Ibid., 110.
[9] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, 59–95.

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It is not clear if Tudor Bugnariu, who worked closely with Herseni over the following years to establish the center for concrete sociological research, knew of the contents of Herseni's presentation beforehand. According to his own admission, Bugnariu had criticized it for "stipulating not only tasks, but also attributions that were too broad, and in the last instance would have led to the center replacing the party and state organs."[10] Over the course of numerous drafts of the project proposal dating from 1964, he took on the role of translating Herseni's technocratic vision, as well as the interests of others involved, into a discourse that emphasized neither party spirit nor expertise, but attempted to integrate both. His was a reformist bid directly inspired by the emerging role of social science in governance in Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia over the previous decade.

Bugnariu reconstructed the course of the attempts to establish the center in a letter addressed to the vice-president of the Academy on June 28, 1964, on the occasion of a meeting of the Academy presidium in which the problem of the center had been brought up again more than a year after Herseni's presentation.[11] A commission comprising Vasile Malinschi, C. I. Gulian, Manea Mănescu, and Costin Murgescu, all members of the National Sociological Committee, had been appointed to study Herseni's proposal and make concrete recommendations. As this never happened, in January 1964, Bugnariu informed the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party separately on why concrete sociological research was necessary, and at the party's request provided a more detailed proposal on March 10, 1964, after which he was informed that the issue will be analyzed by the party. Most probably as a result, the academy had inquired about Bugnariu's proposal. "Please believe me," Bugnariu wrote

[10] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, Tudor Bugnariu to the vice-president of the Academy of the Romanian Popular Republic, 28 June 1964, 152.
[11] Ibid.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

to the vice-president of the Academy, "that I am not led by any personal interest. I was preoccupied with these problems [of the center] not because I wish to be in its leadership, but only out of interest for the development of science in our country."[12] He especially expressed his hope that the center could be established independently of the Institute of Philosophy, which he considered would be but a dead end for any research program. This was most probably a reference to the recently published *History of social and philosophical thought in Romania*, a volume remarkably virulent for the time of its appearance, which reflected the dogmatism of its coordinator and the institute's director, I. C. Gulian. Bugnariu also mentioned as a negative example *The spiritual profile*, which he argued reflected a total lack of knowledge in terms of the methods of concrete sociological research.

It was on the issue of expertise that Herseni's and Bugnariu's interests met and an alliance between two intellectuals of radically different political backgrounds was temporarily made possible. Whether the purpose was rekindling the theoretical line of interwar social philosophy by emphasizing its apolitical approach to (nation-)state building, or reforming political practices starting with the non-democratic, anti-intellectualist governance of science, concrete sociological research represented a break from the epistemology as well as the political practice of Stalinism. The proposal that Herseni and Bugnariu formulated for the central committee was a compromise between the one's vision of sociology as the totalizing science of the social, and the other's belief that science was an instrument of reform from within the party-state.

Herseni had formulated his theoretical perspective in detail in an article on the sociology of family, in which he underlined "the epistemological necessity for a science

[12] Ibid., 153

specialized in the cognitive operations needed to accomplish the synthesis [of partial aspects], a science meant to follow knowledge through, using from a new perspective the analyses obtained by particular sciences and giving them the realization which they cannot attain by themselves."[13] He maintained that synthesis was not simply an operation of assembly of already existing data, but rather required that the sociological perspective be present from the beginning, an idea which went back to his 1930s work on the theory of the sociological monograph. Indeed, the March 1964 proposal prepared for the party emphasized the need to move from particular studies of social phenomena isolated from their context to the study of how they correlated within the complex structure of social life. Yet there was no longer any mention of social engineering, nor of the technical tasks sociologists would perform by virtue of their expert knowledge. On the contrary, the proposal explicitly stated, echoing Bugnariu's initial criticism, that the center for concrete sociological research would not seek to substitute the party or state institutions. Its main task would be to elaborate sociological methodology and to train its own cadres and those of other institutes in its application. In addition, at the request of party or state institutions, it could organize research on various topics related to the construction of socialism, most notably spontaneous social phenomena not covered by planning, changes in the social structure and social consciousness of the working class, in social psychology, and in family relations, the effects of collectivization, urbanization, and technology, as well as the study of public opinion.[14]

[13] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, 4v. In August 1963, Herseni sent the article draft to Bugnariu. As his ten-year interdiction to publish was only lifted in 1964, it is possible that Herseni intended to publish it together with Bugnariu, in an arrangement similar to the one he had with Ralea for *Sociologia succesului* [The sociology of success] (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1962).
[14] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, "Problema Centrului de cercetări sociologice [25 January 1964]" [The issue of the Center for sociological research], 101–103; and "Propuneri pentru înfiinţarea şi organizarea unui Centru de cercetări sociologice concrete [10 March 1964]" [Proposals for establishing a Center for concrete sociological research], 129–36; and "Necesitatea unui Centru de cercetări sociologice concrete [10 March 1964]" [The need for Center for concrete sociological research], 137–43.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Several versions for the organization of the center were kept among Tudor Bugnariu's papers, revealing the difficulties of fitting what was envisaged as a flexible, interdisciplinary scientific practice within the rigid administrative structure of the academy. The hierarchical system of scientific positions, with their respective work norms, also meant that the center would have had to reproduce the same structure of power, even while arguing for a distribution of positions based on expertise. The least extensive model comprised two sections, one for urban and industrial sociology (led by Traian Herseni) and one for rural sociology (Henri H. Stahl), each with two department to which a department for the study of the relationship between city and village was added (Vasile Caramelea).[15] Including a technical-statistical department led by Gheorghe Retegan, this structure would have counted forty employees in 1964–5 and an estimated eighty-five employees by 1975.[16] Other versions envisaged a scientific advisory board whose members (Herseni, Stahl, Caramelea) would not be nominally in charge of separate sections; stipulated that members of the center would collaborate across sections; or even proposed that the leadership positions could be held by different people on a project-by-project basis. For all the detail that went into the organizational structure, the role of the director of the center was never explicitly specified. What was most probably implied, provided that Bugnariu would have been named in the position, was that the director would respond to the academy for the center's activity, would manage the atypical institutional organization, and would mediate between the center and party and state organs to facilitate research and present the results.

In parallel, Bugnariu and Herseni also sought to legitimize the continuity of interwar expertise in terms of cultural politics, which had been attempted at least since the

[15] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, "Proiect de organizare a Centrului de cercetări sociologice concrete în cadrul Academiei Republicii Populare România [28 June 1964]," 149–51.
[16] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, "Propunere" [Proposal], 157.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

second half of the 1950s. An unsuccessful bid to recover the monographic method as an instrument of scientific investigation at the Economic Research Institute of the Romanian Academy saw Costin Murgescu arguing in 1957 that a thorough and necessary analysis of the Bucharest School of Sociology would "cleanse the monographic method of the patina with which professor Gusti's idealism had imbued it, despite its realist essence."[17] His and especially Gheorghe Retegan's attempts to dissociate between theory and method to account for the continuity of interwar expertise[18] were swiftly rebutted politically.[19]

The late 1950s context of renewed intellectual repression was such that even the more sophisticated Marxist analysis of interwar sociology proposed by Ernő Gáll in the *Bourgeois sociology in Romania* (published in 1958 in both Hungarian and Romanian) ultimately read as a corroboration of the attacks against the interwar intellectual tradition. "His voluntarist sociological theory and the monographic method are not independent from one another,"[20] Gáll proved in a complicated dialectical approach to the inner contradictions of Gusti's sociology. He concluded that while the empirical findings of the monographic campaigns could be salvaged, the system as a whole was constructed over the 1920s and 1930s to serve the interests of the ruling classes, especially by training a technocratic elite whose role was to reform capitalism into a rationalized, controlled system. It was not just the opportunity of the so-called "critical

[17] Costin Murgescu, "Cercetările monografice la sate în România II" [Monographic research in villages in Romania II] *Contemporanul*, 23 August 1957.
[18] Gheorghe Retegan, "O fază nouă în cercetarea directă a realității economico-sociale din România" [A new phase in the direct research of socio-economic realities in Romania], *Probleme economice* 11, no. 2 (1958): 31–44.
[19] I. Bochiș, M. Părăluță, V. Spiridon, "Pentru orientarea științifică în cercetarea monografică" [For the scientific orientation of monographic research"], *Lupta de clasă* 39, no. 11 (1959): 75.
[20] Ernő Gáll, *Sociologia burgheză din România. Studii critice* [Bourgeois sociology in Romania: Critical studies] (Bucharest: Editura de stat pentru literatură politică, 1958), 159.

reevaluation" of interwar sociology, but also the budding problematization of technocratic rationalization that were cut short at the end of the 1950s.

Writing in 1964, Herseni and Bugnariu could firmly disengage from the "un-scientific and outdated" sociological theory of Dimitire Gusti, while detailing the impressive number of empirical studies and researchers engaged in the activities of the Bucharest School of Sociology over the 1920s and 1930s. They argued that it had been through the experience of field research that the school obtained increasingly objective results, and developed "a vision of the science of society which allowed it to adhere, without ideological reservations or a sentimental anchoring into the past, to the socialist revolution in our country [*din patria noastră*]."[21] After 1948, consequently, the majority of the members of the Bucharest School of Sociology had gradually adopted Marxism-Leninism, and had been integrated to state institutions. Without identifying them by name, the article exemplified this with the contributions of Herseni, Stahl, Caramelea, and Retegan to empirical studies in the postwar period, in the fields of social medicine, regional systematization, demographic studies in anthropology, and statistics, respectively. Through their work, Herseni and Bugnariu concluded, "the Bucharest School of Sociology does not simply represent an idealist position of the past, but also a new, current scientific position, in the spirit of our socialist order, which by assimilating the Marxist methodology uses critically and self-critically a long experience of field research."[22]

The most elaborate version of the plan for the center for concrete sociological research, most probably compiled after the academy had restarted discussions about its

[21] Tudor Bugnariu and Traian Herseni, "Şcoala Sociologică de la Bucureşti" [The Bucharest Sociological School], *Contemporanul*, 16 October 1964.
[22] Ibid.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

establishment in 1964, counted six sections and twenty units. It was formulated based on input from several social scientists interested in the project, including, among others, the statistician Gheorghe Retegan, the geographer Nicolae Djamo, the demographer Alexandru Pescaru, and Ioan Matei.[23] The latter had started his studies in sociology right before the war and after 1948 specialized in issues of public health and hygiene, social assistance, and urban systematization, working closely with Henri H. Stahl at the Institute for Hygiene and Public Health. Both in its mix of expertise and thematical breadth, the project was clearly inspired by the interdisciplinary, complex teams mobilized for monographic research in the interwar period. The six sections covered economic sociology, the study of geographical and demographical conditions, the sociology of settlements, the sociology of class, national, and confessional relations, the sociology of the state, and the sociology of culture.[24] To these Ioan Matei, with whom Bugnariu consulted on several occasions, proposed to add a section for the study of social services.[25]

In correspondence with Matei towards the end of 1964, as he was compiling the final version of the project, Bugnariu performed as a mediator between the scientific, institutional, and political interests surrounding the center. The plan for its organization "should neither shock nor scare" researchers from other institutes engaged in empirical research, he wrote in reply to Matei's suggestion that sociological studies would "integrate" rather than "complement" partial empirical research. Similarly, sociological studies would not "steer" social transformations, but "ascertain" them, Bugnariu

[23] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, 97–89.
[24] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, "Propuneri privind organizarea centrului de cercetări sociologice al Academiei Republicii Populare România" [Proposals regarding the organization of the Center for sociological reearch of the Academy of the Popular Republic of Romania], 119–23.
[25] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, Ioan Matei to Tudor Bugnariu, "Notă privind propunerile pentru înfiinţarea şi organizarea Centrului de cercetări sociologice concrete" [Note regarding the proposals for establishing and organizing the Center for concrete sociological research], 163–66.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

maintained, since "steering [social] processes is the competence of the party and the state; sociologists must be content with providing documentary material and proposals to the party and state organs."[26] As for the theoretical grounds for the institute's organization, an exchange with the historical sociologist Henri H. Stahl is revealing for Bugnariu's revisionist Marxist approach to concrete sociological research. Bugnariu contacted Stahl, one of the most prominent members of the Gusti school, who had been marginalized but not purged after 1948, and was by then retired, only at the end of 1964. Stahl appreciated the project for its multidisciplinary approach to social investigations, yet expressed his theoretical disagreement with its proposed organization. Instead, he suggested to distinguish between problems of "infrastructure" and superstructure. The former would be covered by two sections studying production processes (with departments for geographical sociology, demographic sociology, the sociology of industrial production processes and the sociology of agricultural production processes) and production relations (with departments for social classes, social categories and groups, and social relations). The latter would also comprise two sections, one for social organization (with departments for juridical sociology, the sociology of administrative organization, and the sociology of planning and systematization), and a section for cultural sociology (with departments for social psychology, the sociology of ethics and social customs, and the sociology of culture).

Stahl did not conceive the departments in isolation from each other. Rather than study separate topics, in practice they would all contribute to researching a number of main problems of current social significance. In addition, Stahl considered that the term "concrete sociology" was improper, as it suggested an opposition to "abstract sociology." In reality, the two main approaches within the Marxist conception of social

[26] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, Tudor Bugnariu to Ioan Matei, 7 November 1964, 161–2.

life, Stahl argued, were historical and contemporary research. The latter's object was either the philosophical development of the laws of social development or the practical application of the resulting knowledge to concrete cases. Reflecting this division between theory and practice, according to Stahl the center for concrete sociological research should have be known rather as a "center for practical sociology."[27]

Stahl's organization reflected his understanding of Marxism as a way of structuring knowledge about the social world, and his identification, in theory, of historical materialism with sociology. Bugnariu however had a narrower definition of the social in mind—not the processes of production but the concrete social relations established in the processes of production; not the means of production, but the social relations forged through their use; not geographic, demographic, or territorial conditions in themselves, but in as much as they determined social relations. Many of the departments identified by Stahl were in fact studied by various disciplines, such as political economy, psychology, or urban planning.[28] Yet Bugnariu's insistence that the center for concrete sociological research should not encroach on the domains covered by other institutions was not merely a pragmatic approach to institutionalization, but also reflected his conviction that epistemologically there was an entire area of social life which was not covered by the existing disciplines of Marxism-Leninism. To avoid theoretical controversy altogether, suggested Stahl in a reply, the center could also be organized around main problems, starting from the two most pressing social processes—industrialization and the socialization of agriculture—and adding the issues of culture (education, mass culture, social psychology) and social relations (classes and

[27] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, Henri H. Stahl to Tudor Bugnariu, 30 November 1964, 168–69.
[28] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, Tudor Bugnariu to Henri Stahl, 2 December 1964, 172–74.

nationalities). A more "modest start" would allow the center to first primarily focus on training future specialists in concrete sociological research.[29]

Dating from December 1964, the final version of the project synthetized almost two years of work. It emphasized the need for concrete sociological research as it "offered the possibility of knowing, *through direct methods*, the overall transformations our country is undergoing," providing party and state organs with information on ongoing social processes and with solutions for the problems encountered. For these purposes, the center would develop methodology, conduct studies, and train cadres. Moreover, it would play a "propaganda role," showcasing abroad Marxist contemporary research and the achievements of socialism, similarly to other sociological centers already established in socialist countries. The previously emphasized institutional flexibility required by the object of research and by the interdisciplinary methodology was downplayed for the sake of expediency, detailing instead how the center would fit within the organizational structure of the academy, specifically its hierarchy of management and research positions.[30]

Compared to the forty-five posts stipulated in the project, in 1965 the academy eventually approved ten positions for the organization of a center for sociological research. Bugnariu considered this merely "a formal decision, which will hold back concrete sociological research for another several years compared to the other socialist countries." He nevertheless maintained that interwar sociologists who already had the knowledge of empirical methodology and the experience of sociological research

[29] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, Henri H. Stahl to Tudor Bugnariu, 12 December 1964, 185–86.
[30] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, "Proiect de organizare a Centrului de cercetări sociologice concrete în cadrul Academiei Republicii Populare România [10 December 1964]" [Project for the organization of the Center for concrete sociological research at the Academy of the Popular Republic of Romania], 175–84.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

should be brought to the center.[31] The signs that Bugnariu's project would not materialize were there already at the end of 1964. Soon after publication, his article with Herseni about the Bucharest Sociological School was criticized on account of its argument about the school's continuity within the framework of Marxist social science, as well as its suggestion that the methodology of empirical research could be updated for the needs of the present. The rebuttal mobilized the leftist criticism of Gusti's project dating back to the 1930s to reaffirm the epistemological primacy of historical materialism as the Marxist-Leninist sociology and its "absolute incompatibility with any bourgeois sociological school." Apart from the problematic ideological framework in which the monographic method had been elaborated, the article also argued that Marxist researchers in Socialist Romania and the Eastern bloc had in the meantime developed other research methodologies, specifically with the contribution of sciences such as political economy, statistics, mathematics, and cybernetics.[32]

Indeed, the center was established, in 1966, under the leadership of the economist Constantin Ionescu, and employed no interwar sociologists.[33] Ionescu, who was director of the Central Statistical Office and coordinated the population and housing census in March 1966, brought in the methodological expertise of statistical economics and oriented the center, in its first years, towards the study of time budgets, a field which represented cutting edge empirical research in the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc (most notably Hungary and Poland) from the second half of the 1950s.[34] Of the researchers originally proposed for the center, only Ioan Matei was hired, who

[31] BCU Cluj, Fund Tudor Bugnariu, file 45, Letter by Tudor Bugnariu, 8 March 1965, addressee unknown, 187

[32] Petre Beraru, "Şcoala Sociologică de la Bucureşti şi imperativul actualităţii" [The Bucharest Sociological School and the imperatives of contemporaneity], *România liberă*, 12 November 1964, 2.

[33] Constantin Ionescu, "Avant-propos," *Revue Roumaine des Sciences Sociales—Serie de Sociologie* nos. 10–11 (1966–1967): 7.

[34] See Alexander Szalai, "Trends in Comparative Time-Budget Research," *American Behavioral Scientist* 9, no. 9 (1966): 3–8.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

coordinated research on territorial systematization and rural and urban development, including impact studies for the relocation of population displaced through intervention in the natural environment in the 1970s, and studies of social ecology in the 1980s. In parallel, Marxist-Leninist sociology developed at the center in the process of institutional and epistemic reorganization of the social sciences more broadly towards the end of the 1960s, resulting in a decades-long research program on social structure, which I analyze in the following sections of the chapter.

As for Herseni, writing in the provincial magazine *Familia*, where he had a permanent column on sociology for several years, he commented bitterly on the state of the discipline at the beginning of 1967. Numerous animated debates, he observed, had left little room for actual sociological research. "Tomorrow's historian of the history of Romanian sociology," he suggested, would not linger over them, yet would nevertheless note 1966 as the year when both a center for sociological research and a section for sociology at the University of Bucharest had first been established. Speaking in the name of the future historian, Herseni questioned the center's focus on economic sociology as well as the section's selection of courses: scientific materialism, political economy, scientific socialism, the history of Romania, the history of the Romanian Communist Party, the history of philosophy, the history of political doctrines, etc.

> We hope however that tomorrow's historian of Romanian sociology, pushed by professional curiosity or his obligation as a scientific researcher, will want or need to go further, to uncover the precursors of these achievements, with the aim of comparing the older stages with those of today, to measure with a scientist's rigor the progress obtained. For this purpose, we can indicate some useful information and even enable the conclusions which he will have to reach.

Maintaining that Romania had been one of the first countries in the world to organize academic courses in sociology, Herseni proceeded to map the programs developed since the beginning of the twentieth century at universities in Bucharest, Cluj, and Iaşi.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

His own contribution, he noted, had been as chair of the department of "national sociology (the sociology of Romania)" at the Faculty of Law in Bucharest, after serving as an assistant in the sociology department at the University of Bucharest, "a *Romanian department*, without a foreign model,"[35] from where the sociological school of Dimitrie Gusti had been established. Herseni also identified the interwar Romanian Social Institute, founded by Gusti at the beginning of the 1920s to conduct research on social issues, as an antecedent for the institutionalization of research in the social sciences.

Herseni's formulation of the idea of a rupture in the history of "national" sociology indeed became a commonly shared conclusion, especially in the period immediately after 1989, serving the purpose of the discipline's re-institutionalization with only minimal turnover among the sociologists active in the 1960s–80s and facilitating the effacement of the Marxist-Leninist strand of sociology developed since the second half of the 1960s. Herseni himself was "indigenized" to national communism in the 1980s as a structural functionalist *avant la lettre*,[36] later to be portrayed as one of the intellectual casualties of the "communist occupation" in a reinterpretation of the interwar period from the perspective of unfulfilled local intellectual projects and potentialities. In this logic, the sociological research he conducted after 1948 has been marginalized as a necessary, yet regrettable compromise with the communist regime.[37]

[35] Traian Herseni, "Bilanţ: 1966" [Review: 1966], *Familia* 3, no. 1 (1967): 6 (emphasis in original).
[36] See Achim Mihu's preface to Herseni's 600-page sociological treatise on the general theory of social life, published posthumously. Detailing a rigid evolutionary approach to society, in Herseni's words the vision he had arrived at by assimilating Marxism in the postwar period, the treatise reads entirely anachronistic in the context of 1980s national communism, and had little echo in spite of Achim's attempt to "indigenize" Herseni's interwar studies. Achim Mihu, "Studiu introductiv" [Introductory study], in Traian Herseni, *Sociologie: Teoria generală a vieţii sociale* [Sociology: The general theory of social life] (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinfică şi Enciclopedică, 1982), 7–30.
[37] Dan Dungaciu, "Traian Herseni sau valenţele neîmplinirii: Încadrări socilogice şi antropologice" [Traian Herseni or the meanings of unfulfillment: Sociological and anthropological framings], in *Portrete şi controverse* [Portraits and controversies] (Bucharest: Tritonic, 2008), 187–224.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

2. The institutional setup

The archives of the Propaganda and Agitation Section of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party document a growing interest in social science education and research towards the end of the 1960s. The issue of Marxist-Leninist teaching had already been flagged at the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee in April 1965, as part of a broader discussion of reform in the field of education. Social sciences, Nicolae Ceauşescu agreed with previous speakers Valter Roman and Leonte Răutu, suffered from "rigid and dogmatic attitudes that still persist in the understanding and interpretation of different new forms of social development."[38]

Two decades into the project of socialist modernization, new socioeconomic and geopolitical realities had rendered postwar Stalinist social thought obsolete. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, consultative meetings were organized with professors of social sciences from the main university centers in 1969.[39] As one of the meetings revealed, the inadequacy of Marxist-Leninist education had become particularly striking against the backdrop of students' heightened engagement with political, social, and philosophical issues. More so after 1968, they showed "resentment or lack of interest in Marxism and social science disciplines,"[40] a situation believed to be caused by the failings of an outdated and rigid social science curriculum as well as by the uncritical promotion of non-Marxist philosophical strands in the sociocultural

[38] Nicolae Ceauşescu, "Cuvântare la încheierea dezbaterilor privind dezvoltarea învăţământului de cultură generală, profesional, tehnic şi superior în Republica Socialistă România," in *România pe drumul desăvârşirii construcţiei socialiste*, vol. 3 (Bucharest: Editura politică, 1969), 160.
[39] Arhivele Naţionale ale României [National Archives of Romania, henceforth ANR], Fond C.C. al P.C.R., Secţia propaganda şi agitaţie, file 16/1969, "Notă" [Report], 16–17.
[40] ANR, Fond C.C. al P.C.R., Secţia propaganda şi agitaţie, file 16/1969, "Notă despre consfătuirea de lucru a cadrelor didactice de la catedrele de ştiinţe sociale din învăţământul superior—10 februarie 1969" [Report on the working meeting of the social science faculty in higher education—February 10, 1969], 3.

press, especially existentialism.[41] The final report of the consultations documented some improvements in the teaching of Marxist-Leninist disciplines in higher education, but was otherwise bleak. It noted the persistence of ideological dogmatism and confusion; the negligence towards certain disciplines, such as sociology or social psychology; the lack of theoretical depth in discussions of contemporary issues, proper justification in the critique of bourgeois ideology, and militant ethos in educating students in the spirit of socialism; and the fact that many professors, especially in the field of scientific socialism, had neither the academic qualifications required to teach nor the ability to improve. Moreover, reflecting the experience of the previous years, the report highlighted the role of research as a pedagogical tool, and argued that it should be expanded, as well as centralized under the coordination of the Ministry of Education.[42] The need to improve social science research, specifically by "eliminating the fragmentation of research forces, [and] insuring a unitary guidance and orientation towards the fundamental problems of social life,"[43] was echoed in Nicolae Ceauşescu's speech at the Tenth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party in August the same year. By September, an institutional solution in the form of an "Academy of Social Sciences" was already being discussed in a briefing about the congress organized by the Propaganda and Agitation Section and the Ministry of Education with social science professors.[44]

[41] Ibid.
[42] ANR, Fond C.C. al P.C.R., Secţia propaganda şi agitaţie, file 16/1969, "Referat cu privire la predarea disciplinelor de marxism-leninism în învăţământul superior" [Report on the teaching of Marxist-Leninist disciplines in higher education], 38–55.
[43] *Congresul al X-lea al Partidului Comunist Român, 6–12 august 1969* [The Tenth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, August 6–12, 1969] (Bucharest: Editura politică, 1969), 72.
[44] ANR, Fond C.C. al P.C.R., Secţia propaganda şi agitaţie, file 26/1969, "Stenograma Seminarului cu cadrele didactice de la catedrele de ştiinţe sociale, 24 septembrie 1969" [Transcript of the seminar with the faculty of social science departments, September 24, 1969],143–44, 160–61.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

The broader ideological climate for this decision, as reflected especially in Paul Niculescu-Mizil's report on the new party line, was distinctly anti-dogmatic and militant. Niculescu-Mizil emphasized the need to overcome the "sclerosis of Marxism-Leninism" and develop original theoretical thought starting from the particularities of the country; work towards raising people's level of culture in opposition to anti-intellectualist approaches to the transformation of social structure; and develop the "socialist nation" within a vision of internationalism based on the principles of independence, sovereignty, and equality. The national problem was considered solved, a fact celebrated as one of the most important achievements of socialism. Similarly, society was now composed solely of friendly social classes and strata, and showed a tendency towards social homogenization.[45] Best illustrating the non-dogmatic militant tone of the meeting, social scientists were encouraged to engage closer with contemporary social thought, including non-Marxist. They were reminded that Marxism did not and could not developed by itself, but only in dialogue with existing scholarship, yet were also advised that closer contact meant taking a more engaged, ideologically intransigent position towards "hostile ideas."[46]

The report and proposals of the Propaganda and Agitation Section for the establishment of an Academy of Social Sciences were introduced by Niculescu-Mizil at a separate meeting with scientists, researchers, and professors in November 1969. The report emphasized that social science research "lagged behind" the development of social realities, was often over-reliant on party documents and the classics of Marxism-Leninism, failed to innovate theoretically, and consequently contributed little to the scientific organization of social life. The Academy of Social Sciences was to remedy

[45] Ibid., 100–21.
[46] Ibid., 125–26.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

the main reasons identified for this situation: institutionally, the lack of coordination and direction either from the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania or the National Council for Scientific Research; and professionally, the lack of training and cadres. Many of its research institutes would be transferred from the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania, yet the new academy was to coordinate the activity of all other centers of research as well, providing theoretical and ideological orientation on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, and in turn responding directly to the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party.[47]

The participants at the meeting read the report and proposals on the spot, and generally regarded the institutional reorganization plans favorably, even when some raised the issues of underfunding or poor management independently of the proposed institutional solution. In the field of sociology, the research teams from the Center of Sociology, Institute of Philosophy, and Institute of Psychology were to be merged either as a National Center of Sociology or a National Center of Social Investigation and Prognosis. Ovidiu Bădina, the director of the Center for the Study of the Problems of Youth, argued in favor of the latter, possibly to secure the continuation of his own institution, but also testifying to the growing importance of prognosis in the self-understanding of sociology as an expert science for governance.[48] Plans to institutionalize a technocratic approach to the social sciences ultimately did not materialize, but neither did the academy solely become, in Nicolae Ceauşescu's words,

[47] "Propunere cu privire la îmbunătăţirea îndrumării activităţii în domeniul ştiinţelor sociale şi crearea Academiei de Ştiinţe Sociale" [Proposal for improving the guidance of activities in the field of social sciences and the creation of the Academy of Social Sciences], Romanian National Archives, Fund C.C. al P.C.R. Secţia propaganda şi agitaţie, file 16/1969, 23–37.

[48] "Stenograma consfătuirii cu oamenii de ştiinţă, cercetăori şi cadre didactice din domeniul şiinţelor sociale, 13 noiembrie 1969" [Transcript of the meeting with scientists, researchers, and faculty in the field of social sciences, November 13, 1969], Romanian National Archives, Fund C.C. al P.C.R. Secţia propaganda şi agitaţie, file 29/1969, 20.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

"an ideological organism of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party."[49]

Established in February 1970 under the leadership of Miron Constantinescu,[50] the Academy of Social and Political Sciences represented the most extensive attempt to institutionalize "creative Marxism-Leninism" from above in the Eastern bloc after 1968. Everyone agreed, during the two-day inaugural meeting, that the academy should promote a "new spirit" of Marxism-Leninism.[51] Yet the party program for the improvement of ideological work adopted just one year later (the so-called "July Theses") maintained that it had done "little" to become "an instrument in the hand of the party and state leadership in its ideological activity."[52] Indeed, a series of measures adopted in November 1971 tasked local party structures to set up social science documentation centers (*cabinete de ştiinţe sociale*) in all the factories, institutions, communes, and cities, for an almost comprehensive reach; but research remained the domain of the respective regional academic branch or university center.[53] As late as November 1972, the academy was yet to achieve its task of "organically fusing" research and education structures for the purpose of people's ideological edification.[54]

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[49] Ibid., 46.

[50] "Decret nr. 121/18 martie 1970 pentru înfiinţarea Academiei de Ştiinţe Sociale şi Politice a Republicii Socialiste România," *Buletinul Oficial* 6, no. 22, part I.

[51] See the speeches of Nicolae Ceauşescu, Paul Niculescu-Mizil, and Miron Constantinescu, and fragments from the interventions of some of the participants at the February 19–20 General Assembly, in *Contemporanul*, 27 February 1970, 1, 8–11.

[52] Nicolae Ceauşescu, *Propuneri de măsuri pentru îmbunătăţirea activităţii politico-ideologice, de educare marxist-leninistă a membrilor de partid, a tuturor oamenilor muncii* [Proposed measures for the improvement of political-ideological activities for the Marxist-Leninist education of party members, and of all working people (Bucharest: Editura politică, 1971), 60.

[53] Corina Pălăşan, "'Organizarea ştiinţifică' a societăţii sau ştiinţele sociale în România primilor ani ai regimului Ceauşescu. Cazul judeţului Iaşi (1970–1972)," in *Structuri de partid şi de stat în timpul regimului comunist*, vol. 3 of *Anuarul Institutului de Investigare a Crimelor Comunismului în România* (Bucharest: Polirom, 2008),

[54] Nicolae Ceauşescu, "Cuvântare la consfătuirea cadrelor didactice care predau ştiinţele sociale în învăţământul superior" [Speech at the meeting of cadres who teach social sciences in higher education], in *România pe drumul construirii societăţii socialiste multilateral dezvoltate* [Romania on the road to constructing the multilaterally developed socialist society], vol. 7 (Bucharest: Editura politică, 1972), 836–37.

The existing historiography generally considers that the establishment of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences signaled the dawn of a new regime of intellectual servitude following a short period of liberalization, a first step towards the "political subordination of the social sciences,"[55] with the goal to transform them into "new-type propaganda."[56] On the one hand, the broader theoretical framework for this interpretation stands at the intersection of two schools of thought: anti-totalitarian political history, which has entrenched the understanding of the 1970s as a period of re-Stalinization, neo-Stalinism, or "national Stalinism,"[57] and studies of the intellectual field concerned with the interplay between structure and agency, science and ideology, and knowledge and power.[58] On the other hand, it is an interpretation faithful to the very sources of research. The archive of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party is one of the two largest collections of documents created during state socialism which was made available to researchers in the past decades, the other being the archive of the secret police. Painstaking historical reconstruction based on holdings of the Agitation and Propaganda Section, in particular, has largely focused on the intricacies of policy making, navigating complex institutional arrangements, at times against the archival grain, for a record of how decisions were made in the field of cultural production. Yet there has been little reflection on the party archive as not simply a record of the workings of power and the centrality of ideology, but also constitutive of them. Consequently, the logic of the archive, its categories of organization, and the bureaucratic network it mapped effectively modelled a circular

[55] Bosomitu, *Miron Constantinescu*, 320.
[56] Cosmin Popa, "Intelectualii în capcana ceauşismului sau înfiinţarea Academiei de Ştiinţe Sociale şi Politice" [Intellectuals in the trap of the Ceauşescu regime or the establishing of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences], *Revista română de sociologie* 28, nos. 1–2 (2017): 15–33.
[57] See the works of Vladimir Tismăneanu, especially *Stalinism for All Seasons* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
[58] Mihai Dinu-Gheorghiu, *Intelectualii în câmpul puterii* [Intellectuals in the field of power] (Iaşi: Polirom, 2007); Verdery, *National Ideology*.

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definition of ideology as both the grounds and the mere justification for political decision making.

My own account of Marxist-Leninist sociology follows the work of researchers from the Center for Sociological Studies of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences studying the social structure of Socialist Romania in the 1970s and 1980s. What was essential to their project was neither the negotiation of the "external" ideological pressure of the party, nor engaging in "internal" debates constituting the intellectual field, but developing new epistemological practices specific to the institutional framework sketched so far. I owe this insight to the peculiar organization of the source base that I am drawing on. Salvaged in 1994 by the Romanian National Archives, the documents now constituting the archive of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences have been processed in the absence of the original recordkeeping instruments. Apart for the structural parts created for each of the academy's eight sections (economic sciences; philosophy and logic; history and archeology; juridical sciences; political sciences; psychology and pedagogy; sociology; and the theory and history of literature and art), the decision was made to organize all the documents referring to administrative, juridical, or financial matters, as well as to the academy's external relations, in a separate sub-fund, Secretariat—Administration.[59]

This was quite unusual in archival practice, which as a rule aims to maintain the system of the original creator, but all the more so as it did not correspond to any one existing administrative structure of the academy. Instead, it aggregated smaller units with the stated goal of keeping only the research related material in each section's sub-fund. A

[59] See the preface of the first inventory released: http://arhivelenationale.ro/site/download/inventare/Academia-de-Stiinte-Sociale-si-Politice.-Sectiile-Filosofie-Logica-si-Psihologie-Pedagogie.-1970-1978.-Inv.-3113.pdf.

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glaring drawback of this organization is that it reproduces, to the point of caricature, the assumption that institutions were hyper-centralized. While it is not clear to what extent the leading body of the academy, a general assembly of about 200 members, ever actually performed the democratic collective leadership of the institution, the task of coordination (rather than centralization) probably did also translate into a less hierarchical, more networked institutional arrangement. This stands both for the distinction between administration and research, and for the boundaries between disciplines.

Does the current organization of the archive reflect the actual practice of disciplinary autarky within the academy, perpetuated in spite of the institutional effort of bringing together social scientists to formulate a coherent ideological project? Alternatively, cross-disciplinary coordination might have taken forms other than "research": we know that the other leading body, the presidium, was established specifically to facilitate communication between sections. Yet despite effacing the differences between the original creator's and postsocialist ideas about the institutional organization of science under state socialism, the most interesting result of this archival system is that, stripped of all the documents supposedly extraneous to research, only the most striking differences and the unacknowledged commonalities of epistemological practice between socialist and post-socialist social science remain documented, notably the system of research planning and the scientific cooperation projects.

Only four sub-funds are currently available to researchers, although most of the work of constituting the archive has already been completed. The final steps have been delayed for over a decade as a result of severe underfunding and researchers' lack of interest. After processing the sections Philosophy and Logic, and Psychology and Pedagogy, and making them available for research in 2009, the staff of the

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Contemporary Archives section was surprised that very few people requested to see them, and the decision was made to carry on with another fund. Their demotivation should not be brushed off as easily as complaints about post-socialist "memory politics" usually do. I have spent a month during the summer of 2014 typing up the inventory of the Sociology Section from index cards prepared when the archive was first founded, double-checking it with the physical documents, and putting boxes in order. At the off-site stacks where they are kept, sometimes in barely satisfactory conditions, the daily exit and return of documents sent to the researchers' reading room in the city center follows routines which are seldom disrupted. Putting a new fund in circulation is the rare exciting highlight of work that is tedious not just because of its limitations (numbering pages and moving boxes is hardly gratifying), but because it is, with the existing resources and as far as the time-span of any career is concerned, endless. Apart from theoretical considerations and the wealth of empirical information, the use of unconventional, partial, or reconstructed archives such as that of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences should also vindicate the painstaking work of archivists thoroughly alienated from their labor by severe material constraints, as well as the intellectual inertia and structural conservatism of the historical profession in Romania.

3. The epistemic setup

In June 1969, in preparation for the 10th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, the theoretical and political organ of the Central Committee, *Lupta de clasă*, organized a debate on the social structure of Socialist Romania. Researchers from the Institute of Philosophy, the Center for Sociological Research, the University of Bucharest, the Central Statistical Office, and many others in the months after the transcript of the debate was published, discussed what the defining social process of the new stage of

socialist development was, and how it should be addressed epistemologically. Participants were divided over the conceptual constellation of social structure, which included social classes and strata, social mobility, role, status, and interest, and especially at odds regarding the issue of social homogenization. The latter had been formulated for the first time in the Central Committee's theses for the congress, published in 1968: "Our society experiences, as it advances on the path of socialism, a growing homogenization based on the gradual elimination of the essential differences between social categories, between village and city, between physical and intellectual work, [based] on the commonality of economic, political, and ideological interests of all working-class people."[60] As the core element of party ideology on the development of society under socialism, the idea of social homogenization would organize the epistemic imaginary of Marxist-Leninist sociology for the following decades.

In the historical materialist conception, the sociologist Haralamb Ene opened the debate, the basis of social structure was the property over the means of production. The consequence of their socialization was the rapprochement (*apropierea*) between social classes and strata, a process known as "social homogenization."[61] This interpretation relied on the four-point textbook definition of social class, as taken from Lenin's 1919 "The Great Initiative":

> Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labor, and, consequently, by the dimension of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labor of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.[62]

[60] *Tezele C.C. al P.C.R. pentru Congresul al X-lea al partidului* (Bucharest: Editura politică, 1968), 20.
[61] "Structura socială a României. Schimb de păreri" [The social structure of Romania: Exchange of opinions], *Lupta de clasă* 49, no. 7 (1969): 56.
[62] V. I. Lenin, *Opere* [Works], vol. 29 (Bucharest: ESPLP, 1956): 404–5. English translation by George Hanna, https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1919/jun/28.htm.

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Almost everyone participating in the debate, however, agreed that this definition no longer fully corresponded to the social changes in the postwar period, and that moving beyond an economic understanding of social class was made necessary by the very development of socialism. This had become apparent during the 1966 census, which registered social category as either worker, peasant, or civil servant/intellectual. As the vice-president of the Central Statistical Office explained, property proved to no longer be a useful way to distinguish among them, and an alternative categorization based on the role or function fulfilled in the production process was needed.[63]

It was not just property, but also the distribution of social wealth in Lenin's definition of social class that had lost its usefulness in a society no longer composed of antagonist classes, argued Mihail Cernea, proposing instead the concept of "professional category" for the study of contemporary changes in social structure.[64] In Cernea's view, it was not homogenization, but socio-professional diversification which was the most important social process unfolding for the sociologist to analyze.[65] To many other participants at the debate, social homogenization came across as a very vague concept: "What is it? How can it be analyzed? Is it grounded empirically in our society?" asked Aculin Cazacu, then professor at the University of Bucharest. He argued that the main factor of the growing homogenization of society was a "convergence of interests" across social groups, which nevertheless allowed for a broad space of variation.[66] Otherwise subsumed to the concept of "socialist consciousness," the notion of interest emphasized the role of individual and collective agency in the structuring of society.

[63] "Structura socială a României," 59.
[64] Ibid., 58.
[65] Ibid., 66.
[66] Ibid., 62.

Having gained increasing currency in party documents in the 1970s, "social homogenization" is often held to represent the worst excesses of the Ceauşescu regime in the 1980s, especially the rural systematization plans and policies towards minorities. Yet the debates at the end of the 1960s show that neither a solely economic definition of social class, nor social homogenization as its theoretical consequence under socialism were accepted without qualification. Indeed, a response to the original debate by the sociologist Gheorghe Cordoş, published almost a year later, was very explicit about the danger of "mythicizing" social homogenization, and of identifying it with uniformity: "Today the idea that uniformity represents a social danger, as it can lead to depersonalization, the destruction of individuality, is a truism."[67] This was not the goal of socialism, argued Cordoş going back to Lenin's conception of social equality and Marx's principle of retribution according to work in socialism. According to Cordoş, the socialist society they had envisioned was not based on the levelling of individuality, but on insuring equal social opportunities to all, regardless of their aptitudes. Consequently, social inequality under socialism would merely reflect the difference in individual capacities.

Of the series of reinterpretations of class and social structure proposed at the end of the 1960s, the one which most coherently recovered the issue of social inequality as the crux of analysis was Honorina Cazacu's. Lenin's definition of social class, she agreed, was meaningful from an economic point of view, but otherwise insufficient:

> The existence of classes is related to the existence of *inequalities* among large groups of people: economic inequalities in the first place, but also political, juridical, cultural, social, in terms of way of life, social consciousness. *The specific combination* of these inequalities results in every class in a society having a specific status and certain function in that society.

[67] Gheorghe Cordoş, "Consideraţii despre omogenizarea şi diversificarea structurii sociale" [Considerations about the homogenization and diversification of the social structure], *Lupta de clasă* 50, no. 10 (1970): 91.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

> Classes are large groups of people distinguished by *their unequal social position and by the different social functions* which they fulfil, these differences being determined by their unequal economic and political situation.[68]

This reinterpretation of class as a relatively stable, structured system of inequalities, relied on Cazacu's previous research into social subsystems, as analyzed in chapter one, but also on the most recent work carried out at the Center for Sociology of the Romanian Academy. After transferring to the center from the Institute of Philosophy in 1967, Cazacu became the head of the industrial sociology research group. In 1968–69, she coordinated an empirical study on the social factors of labor productivity at the Electromagnetica factory in Bucharest, coauthored with Oscar Hoffman, Gheorghe Socol, and Mihai Mocanu. Published in 1970, it maintained that labor productivity was not merely an economic issue, but was determined by social factors both intrinsic to work (workers' integration, attitude towards work, aspirations and satisfaction, informal relations, innovation, etc.) and extrinsic to it (the stability of the workforce, type of leadership, the system of information, the system of social services, family situation, distance from the workplace, etc.).[69] Analyzed as social processes, labor integration and labor fluctuation were shown to vary according to workers' level of qualification, work experience, and length of employment, and reflect the poor organization of labor, lack of management skills, as well as the absence of basic infrastructure and necessary services. Knowledge of these issues was meant to inform the scientific management of the labor force at the factory level, the practice of democratic, socialist humanist leadership, and an interest in the worker as a social individual, rather than an economic unit, goals consistent with the economic reformist

[68] "Structura socială a României," 70.
[69] Honorina Cazacu, coord., *Factori sociali ai productivităţii muncii* [Social factors of labor productivity] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1970), 45.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

ideas of the second half of the 1960s.[70] In the process, workers were conceived as social agents defined not simply by economic factors (property or wealth), but by multiple characteristics, each part of a different system of inequalities.

As Henri H. Stahl, the head of the sociology section of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences noted, social structure was one of the main themes in the five-year research plan adopted for the 1971–75 period by the academy, and so became a regularly debated issue among researchers.[71] Yet already beginning in the early 1970s the epistemic context of the debate was expanding to cover similar research carried out in the Eastern bloc. Reporting on a meeting organized in 1971 in Warsaw on the topic of the social structure of socialism, which brought together Polish, Bulgarian, East German, Romanian, Hungarian, and Soviet sociologists, Honorina Cazacu noted the main common lines of research at the time: the systemic approach to social structure; the interest to re-define the concept of class in accordance to the social transformations brought by socialism, combined with an awareness of the growing importance of criteria such as the social division of work, the content of work, and the degree of training for the stratification of society; and the study of the dynamic of the social categories thus identified—that is, the study of socio-professional mobility.[72]

The broader epistemic context of Marxist research on social structure also allowed for the negotiation of local epistemic constraints. Following his participation in the labor productivity research project, in 1970 Oscar Hoffman published an article on the

[70] According to Vlad Paşca, the main economic reformist ideas advanced by the party in the second half of the 1960s were: the increased role of the state, compared to the party, in economic affairs; decentralization of decision making in industry; scientific planning from below; collective management; and scientific management. Vlad Paşca, "Exploring the Failure of Economic Reform in Communist Romania (1967–1974)," *Analele Universității București, Istorie* 62, no. 1 (2014): 89.
[71] Emilian Goldştein, "Structura socială a României contemporane" [The social structure of contemporary Romania], *Viitorul social* 1, no. 4 (1972): 1307.
[72] Honorina Cazacu, "Conferința sociologilor asupra problemelor structurii sociale a societății socialiste" [The conference of sociologists on the issues of the social structure of the socialist society], *Viitorul social* 1, no. 1 (1972): 249–50.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

classification of social categories in contemporary Marxist sociology, in which he identified two main theoretical positions. The first held that property over the means of production, and consequently class, were no longer the basis of social structure in socialism; their place was taken by professional stratification according to income and social prestige. The second theoretical strand maintained that property (state and cooperative) continued to distinguish between social classes in socialism.[73] Hoffman identified with the latter. His examples covered almost the entire Eastern bloc, from Włodzimierz Wesołowski's analysis of the social stratification of the Polish society,[74] to Pavel Machonin's argument that the type of work represented the most important factor of social differentiation in Czechoslovakia, to the studies of social stratification of Yugoslav sociologists Oleg Mandič[75] and Radomir D. Lukic.[76] Reacting to their position that classes under socialism had either disappeared or played an increasingly marginal role in terms of social structure, Hoffman argued that in spite of all advances made, classes remained a reality—yet it was not the property over the means of the production, at which everyone participated equally, but the position towards them which defined classes. Workers, peasants, and intellectuals related differently to the means of production, and it was the qualitative difference between them that the concept of class maintained. In this way, Hoffman articulated a position both closer to classical Marxism-Leninism in the context of the Eastern bloc, and further from the simplifications of the "social homogenization" thesis. "The process of social homogenization does not diminish the need to analyze the specificity of classes in

[73] Oscar Hoffman, "În legătură cu criteriile principale de clasificare a categoriilor sociale" [Regarding the main classification principles of social categories], *Revista de filozofie* 17, no. 8 (1970): 966.
[74] Wlodzimierz Weslowski, "Transformation de la structure de classe en Pologne socialiste," *Recherches internationals à la lumière du marxisme*, no. 53 (1966).
[75] Oleg Mandič, "La stratification sociale en Yugoslavie et la notion de classe," *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 39 (1965): 171–84.
[76] Radomir D. Lukic, "L'influence de l'autogestion ouvrière sur la structure de classe de la société Yougoslave," *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 39 (1965): 185–96.

socialism," Hoffman opened his article, "but, on the contrary, presupposes and implies it."[77] This ambiguity between the legitimation and the subversion of everyday Marxism-Leninism through complex theoretical constructions, in the context of both regional and East–West epistemic and political power relations, powered social structure research throughout the 1970s.

Hoffman's career is exemplary for what I identify as Marxist-Leninist sociology. Born in 1930 in Târgovişte, he studied at the Philosophy Faculty of the University of Bucharest from 1949 to 1953, at the height of the Stalinist period. In his memoir, philosopher Mircea Flonta described the stifling intellectual milieu at the time: being taught over and over the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Stalin's 1938 so-called *Short Course*) and Lenin's writings, students had neither the time nor the necessary knowledge to engage even with the writings of Marx and Engels, optional readings which were probably deemed "too intellectual." There was no systematic training in "bourgeois philosophy," few professors were left who could have provided any, and students were required to engage extensively in political meetings and rallies, which were "an extraordinary waste of time and energy, designed to form and to consolidate conformist behavior." Overall, the Faculty of Philosophy was perceived as a place that trained "cadres for the ideological front."[78]

Yet this was also the time of the democratization of higher education, with policies aiming to redress the highly unequal social composition of the student body by recruiting and supporting through their studies an unprecedented number of students of worker and peasant backgrounds. Initially, it was the tax waivers and scholarships that,

[77] Hoffman, "În legătură cu criteriile principale," 965.
[78] Mircea Flonta, "Student la filozofie, în anii '50" [Philosophy student in the '50s], in *Drumul meu spre filozofie* [My path to philosophy] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2016).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

while barely ensuring the minimum necessary for the poorest, nevertheless made it possible for many more to pursue higher education. This meant that the percentage of students of worker background rose from 9% in the 1949–50 academic year to over 20% in the 1951–52 academic year, and continued to grow throughout the 1950s.[79] A new round of policies, including a system of double admission which favored candidates of worker and peasant background, followed in 1957, and the two social categories combined quickly reached the target of 70% of the student body. This was shortly after the 1956 student protests in solidarity with the Hungarian revolution, which left many students publicly denounced, expulsed, or tried in a wave of repression which sweeped the country's main universities in 1957–58.

A time of intellectual stifling and social mobility, repression and political mobilization, 1958 saw Oscar Hoffman, after several years of teaching at the university, lose his position for refusing to appear in court at the student trials in Bucharest. He worked as a scientific secretary at the Society for the Dissemination of Science and Culture and at the State Committee for Culture and Art until 1968, when he became a researcher at the recently established Center for Sociological Research, a position which he kept, through several institutional reorganizations and a revolution, until his retirement in 2007.[80] In the first half of the 1970s, Hoffman specialized in industrial sociology, travelling to the Soviet Union for an exchange in October 1971,[81] and in social structure research, spending four months in the United States on an IREX scholarship in September 1972–

[79] Marius Cazan, and Vlad Paşca, "'Lupta de clasă' la porţile facultăţilor. Politici de promovare socială prin învăţământul superior în epoca Gheorghiu-Dej (1948–1965)" [Class struggle at the university gates: Politics of social promotion through higher education in the Gheorghiu-Dej era (1948–1965)], in Lucian Nastasă and Dragoş Sdrobiş, eds., *Politici culturale şi modele intelectuale în România* [Cultural politics and intellectual models in Romania] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura MEGA, 2013), 265.
[80] "Oscar Hoffman," in *Sociologi români*, 253.
[81] Arhivele Naţionale ale României, Bucureşti, Fond Academia de Ştiinţe Sociale şi Politice, Secţia Sociologie [henceforth ANR, ASSP—Sociologie], file 6/1971, "Schimburi de experienţă, vizite de informare şi documentare ştiinţifică" [Exchanges, scientific research and documentation visits], 50.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

January 1973. During his stay in the United States, Hoffman met with sociologists from several universities, most notably Columbia, Harvard, Boston, Northern Illinois, University of Chicago, University of Pennsylvania, and Berkeley. Upon his return, he reported that in the field of social structure research, American sociologists were increasingly investing in macro-sociological theoretical analyses of social classes, social mobility, and stratification, over simply conducting empirical studies. They showed a more critical bent and an interest in Marxist theory, studied mostly through secondary literature. In a passage illustrative for the engagement of Marxist-Leninist sociologists with Western bourgeois sociology more broadly throughout the 1970s, Hoffman remarked:

> References to Marxism do not mean however that it [Marxism] is also accepted. Usually, Marxism is used only in what concerns the historical explanation of the emergence of classes. American bourgeois sociology continues to engage with Marxism by omitting its revolutionary element, the political conclusions stemming from the Marxist analysis of class relations. In this sense, the main tendency is still to replace the explanation of class structure with the analyses of stratification which obscure the real essence of social structure: property and power.[82]

The view of Western sociology as a theoretically interesting, potentially critical, but ultimately politically flawed approach to the crucial issue of social inequality was not simply the result of ignorance or dogmatism, but reflected the structural epistemic constraints within which Marxist-Leninist sociology developed in the early 1970s. The opportunities to spend an extended period of time abroad, especially in the United States, were limited to a small number of IREX scholarships. Moreover, one's experience also depended on the choice of university, which in the absence of prior contacts was largely a matter of chance. Finally, those who spent time abroad found

[82] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 3/1973, "Informare asupra activității de documentare desfășurate în SUA în perioada 28 septembrie 1972–28 ianuarie 1973" [Report on the documentation carried out in the United States, 28 September 1972–28 January 1973], 77.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

themselves treated with caution, suspicion, or even hostility upon their return. One such example is Mihail Cernea, criticized for applying American sociological theories to Romanian experiences—specifically, the theory of organizations to the analysis of the agricultural cooperative, an approach he developed while on a fellowship at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, in 1970–71.[83]

Cernea's time at Stanford had been exceptionally productive. Upon his return from the United States, he also published a volume of interviews with prominent American sociologists, contextualized in what was the most detailed mapping of contemporary American sociology at the time in Romania. The final chapter, in particular, in which he described the increasing radicalization of the American sociological field since the end of the 1960s, discussed how the interest in social inequality, social indicators, and social problems had resulted from what had originally started as a contestation of the conservatism of academic sociology by radical sociologists:

> They analyzed and "unmasked" the conditions in which the American sociologist works for a particular political elite, a power elite; the conditions in which he is subservient to the state hierarchy or academic hierarchy; the conditions in which he is subdued through the system of contracts and through the organization of the process of research, and is not free; the conditions in which sociology cannot fully realize its vocation to pursue the truth.[84]

Seen from this perspective, it was not just that no such contestation was possible in 1970s Socialist Romania, but that social structure and social inequality research was developing as the very strand of sociological inquiry most invested in the theorization and legitimization of the party line on the issue of social development under socialism. The theorization of the concept of "social homogenization" at the Center for

[83] See Mihail Cernea, *Sociologia cooperativei agricole* [The sociology of the agricultural cooperative] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1974).
[84] Mihail Cernea, *Sociologia americană: Tendinţe şi controverse* [American sociology: Trends and controversies] (Bucharest: Editura enciclopedică română, 1974), 227. For the volume, Cernea interviewed Reuben Hill, Stanton Wheeler, John Kunkel, Alvin Bertrand, Elliot Aronson, and Immanuel Wallerstein.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Sociological Research between 1971 and 1977, under the coordination of the director of the center, Constantin Ionescu, is a telling example.

As defined in a volume on the working class in Socialist Romania, coauthored by Ionescu and Hoffman, "social homogenization" was a "stadial process of gradual disappearance of the essential social differences between different types of communities (classes, social structures, city-village, family, etc.), within them (the homogenization 'from the inside' of classes, for example), as well as between fundamental human activities (manual–intellectual labor, agricultural–industrial labor)."[85] Closely following the meaning of homogenization laid out in party documents beginning in 1968, Ionescu and Hoffman also articulated the concept in the context of ongoing theoretical debates between Western and socialist sociologists on the relationship between industrial development and socio-economic inequalities. In a debate organized in December 1973, Ionescu emphasized that social homogenization was a process specific only to socialism, while Hoffman embedded it in a history of development as pursued in Romania after 1948: beginning with the revolutionary stage which laid down the groundwork of socialism, when homogenization meant the elimination of exploiting classes; continuing with the current stage of building the "multilaterally developed society," by gradually effacing social differences; and eventually concluding with communism, in which social inequalities would completely disappear.[86] Other researchers who had been involved in the research project since 1971, such as Argentina Firuţă, Emilian Goldştein, Marcel Doru, Camelia Zlate, and Mircea Spiridoneanu, further detailed this basic theoretical and historical structure

[85] Constantin Ionescu and Oscar Hoffman, *Clasa muncitoare în Republica Socialistă România* [The working class in the Socialist Republic of Romania] (Bucharest: Editura politică, 1974), 157.
[86] "Omogenizarea socială în România" [Social homogenization in Romania], *Viitorul social* 3, no. 2 (1974): 430–33.

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touching upon the role of industrial development, education and culture, and the socialist consciousness in the process of social homogenization and its dialectical counterpart, heterogenization.[87]

Commenting on the presentations, Mihail Cernea criticized the lack of precise data on the process of homogenization and suggested that the theoretical emphasis on homogenization went beyond what existing social realities allowed, proposing to focus on the process of diversification instead. Cernea argued in no unclear terms that social inequalities were preserved under socialism, that they should be treated as a fact and studied accordingly (for instance, the role of the family in reproducing socio-economic and cultural inequalities), and that what would have been of interest was an analysis of the actual political measures taken to reduce them. He concluded with the added clarification that neither the homogenization of social roles nor that of individuals should be the goal of a modern, complex society.[88] Ionescu retorted, in his conclusions to the debate, that none of the speakers had simply limited themselves to repeating the party documents, but rather attempted to answer the call to clarify social phenomena and inform social policies.[89]

Oscar Hoffman, in particular, reflected on the conceptual work involved in social structure research in his dissertation, completed under the supervision of Tudor Bugnariu in 1977. A study of social epistemology, his analysis of the construction of operational conceptual systems drew on a broad range of contemporary Western literature in the philosophy and epistemology of science. How do concepts mediate

[87] A volume co-authored by them, Ionescu, and Hoffman, was published in 1977. See Constantin Ionescu, ed., *Omogenizarea socială în Republica Socialistă România: Procese şi factori* [Social homogenization in the Socialist Republic of Romania: Processes and factors] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1977)
[88] “Omogenizarea socială în România,” 440–41.
[89] Ibid., 444.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

between social theory and concrete sociological research? asked Hoffman, proposing a schema of the use of concepts in sociology inspired by W. L. Wallace's 1971 representation of the process of science.[90] Whereas Wallace imagined a circular relationship between the inductive and deductive methods, where theory informed observation which in its turn built back into theory, Hoffman adapted this model to simultaneously suggest a hierarchy of theory, concepts, and concrete sociological research. The work of the sociologist, this model suggested, happened mostly at the conceptual level (formulating a scientific language that reflects social reality), whereas theory, although informed by concepts, was not fully integrated into the feedback loop.[91] In this sense, the epistemological assumptions of Marxist-Leninist sociology were indeed political, as was Cernea's contestation of the theory of "social homogenization."

The exchange between the research group coordinated by Ionescu and Cernea, reflects the renewed politicization, in the first half of the 1970s, of the dividing lines cutting across the field of social sciences which I sketched in the previous chapter. It also suggests the increasing importance of transnational frameworks of reference for positioning oneself in the sociological field, and implicitly politically, a consequence of the re-embeddedness of Romanian sociologists in networks of sociological knowledge production and circulation beginning in the 1970s, which I analyze in the following section. Marxist-Leninist sociology, and social structure research in particular, was not simply (or not only) politically subservient to the party line in terms

[90] Wallace's theoretical work on sociology sough to model the discipline after the natural sciences, proposing a metalanguage that would allow for the formulation of a system of laws across the various branches of quantitative and qualitative sociology at the time. See William W. Falk, "Sociology as a Natural Science? The Agenda of Walter Wallace," *Sociological Inquiry* 60, no. 3 (1990): 227–35.
[91] Oscar Hoffman, *Sisteme conceptuale operaţionale în sociologie* [Conceptual operational systems in sociology] (Bucharest Editura ştiinţifică şi enciclopedică, 1977), 226–27.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

of the theory of social development; it was also the result of local, regional, and global constraints to knowledge production.

4. *A "common front" in Marxist-Leninist sociology*

In 1971, Bulgarian sociologist Zhivko Oshavkov, who had been elected vice president of the International Sociological Association (ISA) following the 1970 World Congress of Sociology held in Varna, wrote to the Romanian Academy of Social and Political Sciences about a meeting of sociologists from socialist countries in preparation for the 1974 World Congress in Toronto. In April that year, delegates of the national sociological associations and sociological institutes from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union arrived in Bucharest to discuss the best strategies for Marxist sociologists going forward. The congress in Varna had been the first to take place in a socialist country, and predictably it gathered an unprecedented number of representatives from the Eastern bloc.[92] "It was the most impressive ideological event in the world in 1970,"[93] declared the Bulgarian sociologist Stoyan Mihaylov in his Bucharest speech, but some of the other delegates were much more moderate in their assessments.

The problems identified ranged from the disparity between the quantity and the quality of the papers coming from different socialist countries and the fact that many participants did not speak the official language of the congress well enough to contribute to discussions, to issues regarding the uneven distribution of power and

[92] See Jennifer Platt, *A Brief History of the ISA: 1948–1997* (Madrid: International Sociological Association, 1998).

[93] All references are to the transcript of the meeting held in April 1970. ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 8/1971, "Stenograma consfătuirii delegaţiilor asociaţiilor naţionale şi a institutelor din ţările socialiste din 7–8 aprilie 1971" [Record of the meeting of the delegates of national associations and institutes from the socialist countries, April 7–8, 1971], 41–134.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

resources between the East and the West, within the Eastern bloc, and in the home countries themselves. The Czechoslovak delegate pointed to the need to tie preparations for the future congress to the national research plan for lack of other funds, which effectively meant pursuing topics decided upon by the organizing committee. Gennady Osipov, the Soviet representative, decried the limited access to information and patchy knowledge of the latest research produced by sociologists in the West, and suggested that the socialist sociologists split the huge amount of material among themselves, and inform each other about the literature produced in other countries. The German delegate, who shared Osipov's concern, added that cooperation among the socialist countries, in terms of circulating knowledge or offering administrative support, functioned only among delegation leaders at the official level and within the already hierarchical structures of international organizations. One such example was the expectation that the president of the International Sociological Association, Jan Szczepanski, would be able to intervene on the part of socialist sociologists. The implication was that this type of cooperation merely reproduced existing institutional power structures, a situation which was further aggravated by the fact that, as the Hungarian delegate observed, even the socialist representatives who were part of the executive committee were reluctant to engage in debates over decision-making with their Western colleagues.

Given this picture of asymmetrical power relations, the strategy eventually chosen for the congress in Toronto appears counterintuitive, but speaks to the epistemic effects of the imperfect alignment between geopolitical, ideological, and scientific commitments. Oshavkov put forward as a proposed theme for the congress "the scientific-technological revolution" (STR), which had indeed been shaping up since the mid-

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

1960s as "a major evolving component of contemporary Marxism-Leninism."[94] For the Soviet Union, STR has been credited with being not just an intellectual innovation, but an institutional and strategic realignment which made possible collaboration and transfer, both of ideas and technology, between the socialist and capitalist worlds: "STR […] was a powerful tool of sense-making that linked the two opposing regimes."[95] However, at the time of the Bucharest meeting STR had almost no backing among socialist sociologists. Several of the delegates, Gennady Osipov included, admitted that while the topic had been extensively pursued in philosophy, there were almost no sociological studies carried out at the time. The situation was similar in Hungary and Romania, but it was agreed that grounding the theme of the scientific-technological revolution within the broader context of social structure would allow for the production of empirical studies as well as appeal to both East and West.

Romanian sociologists, who had been invited to send one representative to the congress program committee, self-identified as mediators between bourgeois and socialist sociologists. As Miron Constantinescu explained in a meeting of the National Sociological Committee in which the two program projects proposed by Reuben Hill and Zhivko Oshavkov for the congress were being discussed, "one did not have the moral and political right to go back on the proposals adopted by all the socialist countries in Bucharest." At the same time, he argued with barely veiled irony against his Bulgarian counterparts that not all proposals coming from the West should be regarded with suspicion. Reflecting the rising demographic anxieties in Europe at the time, Constantinescu maintained that the only unacceptable theme from Romania's

[94] Eric P. Hoffmann, "Soviet Views of the 'Scientific-Technological Revolution,'" *World Politics* 30, no. 4 (1978): 617.
[95] Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, *The Power of Systems: How Policy Sciences Opened Up the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 33.

perspective was "demographic change and social organization," and that ultimately even if that was chosen, "we won't fight on battlefields where battles are lost."[96] With this statement, a fragile balance was reached between Eastern bloc cooperation, possibilities for dialogue on the common ground shared with "bourgeois sociologists," and strategic withdrawal.

Apart from "choosing the battlefield," a second strategy of the socialist sociologists was to parallel institutional models of collaborative research in response to the uneven distribution of resources among the members of ISA, with most of its funded research committees strongly dominated by Western sociologists. This was not, however, merely an antagonistic pursuit, but rather constituted overlapping networks of professionals and relied on the transfer of expertise across collaborative projects the history of which awaits to be written. As one of the two socialist sociologists involved in the ISA research committee on social stratification and social mobility, Włodzimierz Wesołowski organized the international conference "Class Structure, Social Stratification, and Social Mobility" in Poland in 1974, which brought together leading sociologists from East and West in preparation for the World Congress in Toronto.[97] Representing Romania, Oscar Hoffman delivered a paper on "Class Structure and Social Homogenization," reporting upon his return that the investigation conducted at the Center for Sociological Research had been received with interest and was unique among both Western and Eastern studies. He went on to assess Western sociologists as increasingly critical of the realities of capitalist societies, giving the example of S. M. Miller and his findings that across the United States and other capitalist countries,

[96] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 6/1972, "Stenograma şedinţei comitetului national pentru congresul de sociologie din 9 martie 1972" [Record of the meeting of the national committee for the congress of sociology, March 9, 1972], 49–84.
[97] For the history of the research committee, see "Research Committee 28: Social Stratification and Social Mobility," *ISA Bulletin*, no. 31 (Spring 1983): 22–27.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

working class children's chances of social mobility were decreasing in comparison with past trends as well as with the chances of middle-class children's mobility, and that education was unable to mitigate inequalities stemming from social background. Despite their interest in the consequences of the distribution of private property, he noted that these studies nevertheless lacked a critical class perspective, echoing his previous evaluation of contemporary American sociology.[98]

Hoffman did not go on to participate at the World Congress of Sociology in Toronto, reserved for a small number of established sociologists, many in leadership positions, such as Henri H. Stahl, Constantin Nicuţă, Ion Drăgan, or Ion Iordăchel. Upon their return, they reported on the poor performance of their counterparts from socialist countries, criticizing the participants from the Soviet Union, the GDR, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia as overly dogmatic, and their papers for being "marked by a spirit of sufficiency and triumphalism which situated them outside scientific debates."[99] Yet it was exactly this parallel network of socialist sociologists that the researchers from the Center for Sociological Research found themselves uneasily embedded in for the following decade.

The Warsaw conference was immediately followed by the founding meeting of the inter-academic research commission for the study of the "Evolution of the social structure of socialist society: Social planning and prognosis," set up by the institutes of sociology from the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Hungary, and Romania, under the coordination of the Polish Sociology and Philosophy Institute and

[98] Oscar Hoffman, "Informare" [Report], Romanian National Archives, ASSP—Sociologie, 8/1974, 30–34.

[99] "Informare privind cel de-al VIII-lea Congres mondial de sociologie" [Report on the Eight World Congress of Sociology], Romanian National Archives, ASSP—Sociologie, 28/1972, 19.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

its president, Wesołowski.[100] After some hesitation, Romania confirmed its participation in two of the eight subgroups formed: “The way of life and system of values of the social classes and groups in socialist society” and “The working class in the social structure of socialist society,” coordinated by the Polish and Soviet Academies of Science, respectively. Focusing on the involvement of Romanian sociologists in the latter research group, I argue that their experience over the years was symptomatic of the growing tension between transnational cooperation within the Eastern bloc, Romania’s cultivation of an image of increasing independence from the Soviet Union abroad, and building national communism at home.

The commission adopted a five-year plan at its second plenary meeting, held in Moscow in June 1975. Its aims were to describe the general laws of development of class structure in socialist societies, as well as their specific manifestation in various socialist countries; to devise a common set of methodological principles for research on social structure and coordinate comparative studies based on them; to decide on shared principles for long-term planning and forecasting; and to study the socialist way of life.[101] For its part, the subgroup researching the working class was to elaborate the theoretical and methodological principles for studying the leading role of the working class under socialism, its sources of growth, and its internal structure, as well as analyze, together with the subgroup researching intellectuals in the structure of the socialist society, the gradual disappearance of the differences between the intellectuals

[100] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 8/1974, “Protocolul şi recomandările şedinţei comisiei de problemă ‘Evoluţia structurii sociale a societăţii socialiste. Planificarea şi prognozarea socială, Varşovia, 15 martie 1974” [Protocol and recommendations of the meeting of the research group on the “Evolution of the social structure of socialist societies: Social planning and forecast,” Warsaw, March 15, 1974], 5–8.
[101] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 6/1975, “Planul tematic de problemă al colaborării la comisia de problemă ‘Evoluţia structurii sociale a societăţii socialiste. Planificarea şi prognoza socială’ pe anii 1976–80” [Thematic plan for collaboration within the research group on the “Evolution of the social structure of socialist societies: Social planning and forecast” for the years 1976–80], 67.

and the working class.[102] The latter was a new development, and unlike the original goal of the "working class" research group, which was merely the publication of a collection of studies in preparation for the 1978 World Sociology Congress in Uppsala, it sought to engage Soviet and Eastern bloc sociologists in collaborative research. Specifically, according to a preliminary timeline, the group was to adopt common theoretical and methodological guidelines for a comparative empirical research project in 1976, with a pilot study projected for 1977 and a monograph on "The working class and intellectuals in the social structure of socialist society" for 1980–82. In preparation for the group's meeting in 1976 in Berlin, the Soviet researchers were to elaborate the "complex research program" for approval.[103]

The report submitted by Ioan Matei and Argentina Firuţă, the two delegates representing the Center for Sociological Research at the meeting in Moscow, is telling of the difficult position in which Romanian sociologists found themselves. The mandate they received before the meeting required them to avoid committing to common methodologies, programs for research, or comparative empirical studies, and to advocate that each socialist country should remain in charge of knowledge production about its specific social context within the project.[104] As noted by Matei and Firuţă, this understandably produced tension among the participants with regard to Romania's willingness to cooperate. The strategy fit the party line pursued since the second half of the 1960s, which seemingly relaxed the ideological constraints on knowledge production in the social sciences and the humanities, while cultivating Romania's image abroad as one of the more independent members of the Eastern bloc, particularly

[102] Ibid., 68–69.
[103] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 6/1975, "Protocolul şedinţei I-a a grupei de lucru 'Clasa muncitoare în stuctura socială a societăţii socialiste'" [Protocol of the first meeting of the working group "The working class in the social structure of socialist society"], 79.
[104] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 6/1975, Ioan Matei and Argentina Firuţă, "Raport de activitate" [Activity report], 92.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

after its refusal to intervene in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Yet for sociologists the line between maintaining their autonomy in international or transnational exchanges and isolation also shifted along with the dynamics of the profession back home.

In the early 1970s, Bulgarian sociologists' calls to form a "common front" against "bourgeois" sociology at the World Congress in Toronto had not been received with enthusiasm by Romanian sociologists, who translated their mandated autonomy into self-identification as mediators between the scientific and ideological exigencies of East and West. By the mid-1970s, as expectations that sociology would become a science of social engineering supported by the party were dwindling, performing autonomy and avoiding commitment put the Romanian delegation in the difficult position of having to respond to the Bulgarian counterparts' complaints that after promising to collaborate in the field of urbanization and migration research, "they had left everything on the weak shoulders of Bulgarian sociology." The limits of the collaboration to which they ultimately consented, avoiding to undertake any work of coordination, but presenting and submitting a paper on urbanization for publication, were judged to be "in the interest of establishing Romanian sociology [abroad]."[105]

To the extent that international prestige was still a bargaining chip, the authors of the report on the Moscow meeting argued that further participation in the research group would "increase the authority of Romanian science, and sociology in particular, at the international level," suggesting that within the limits of a generic theoretical and methodological framework, continued cooperation would be desirable.[106] Consequently, they found themselves arguing for a certain degree of scientific autonomy *through* involvement in a tightly ideologized research project, which

[105] Ibid., 91.
[106] Ibid.

constantly required the performance of this autonomy. This goes to show that the often-discussed tension between science and ideology was not merely a product of local conditions, but also an effect of the distribution of power within the Eastern bloc, as constituted and negotiated through transnational projects.

The following meeting of the subgroup researching the working class was organized together with the subgroup studying the topic of intellectuals in socialism, of which Romanian sociologists were not part. The report submitted by Oscar Hoffman and Argentina Firuţă to the Academy of Social and Political Sciences upon their return from Berlin in 1976 attests to the ongoing tension between the Romanian delegates' minimal mandates and the increasingly detailed protocols adopted within the framework of the inter-academic collaboration. Hoffman and Firuţă informed the academy that the Romanian delegation had reiterated that sociologists from each country should decide independently on their degree of involvement in the project, as they faced specific issues raised by particular social realities, and worked with distinct interpretations of Marxism-Leninism.[107] As for the projected comparative empirical study of the relationship between the working class and intellectuals under socialism, to be conducted starting the following year, the two research subgroups decided on a minimum set of provisions: every country would choose independently an area typical in terms of economic development where to conduct the study, as well as the economic branches and size of the sample. The following meeting, however, to be held in 1977 in Moscow, had a much more ambitious agenda: it was to discuss the system of indicators and the method of random selection to be used, as well as form a group of

[107] This was reflected in the chapter submitted for the collective volume published by the commission in preparation for the 1978 World Sociology Congress in Uppsala. See Constantin Ionescu, Oscar Hoffman, and Argentina Firuţă, "Changes in the structure of the working class of the Socialist Republic of Romania," in *Social Development of the Working Class in Socialist Societies*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Institute of Sociological Research of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1978), 143–86.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

specialists to elaborate the common research methodology and techniques of investigation and data interpretation.[108]

Ion Drăgan, who became director of the Center for Sociological Research in 1975, after it merged with the Laboratory of Sociology and was reorganized under the administration of the University of Bucharest,[109] wrote to the Academy of Social and Political Sciences in 1977 for approval for the participation of Romanian sociologists in the comparative empirical research on the working class and intellectuals in socialism. He argued that for sociologists from the center, who had studied issues of social structure for several years, taking part in the comparative study would be an opportunity to both present the advances made in Romania and join in debates about the most pressing scientific issues of the time.[110] From his part, Ştefan Costea, the president of the sociology section of the academy, suggested that a Romanian sociologist should participate as an observer at the theoretical and methodological discussions in Moscow, without committing to anything before the project details were finalized.[111] The trip was not approved by the academy,[112] yet beginning in 1977, the research group coordinated by Constantin Ionescu conducted a study on the changes in the structure of the working class under the conditions of the scientific-technological revolution, the focus of which was the relationship between manual and intellectual labor.

[108] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 6/1975, "Informare asupra şedinţei grupei de lucru 'Clasa muncitoare în structura socială a societăţii socialiste'" [Report on the meeting of the research group on the "Working class in the social structure of socialist societies"], 2–5.
[109] On the several reorganizations and relocations of the Center for Sociological Research in the second half of the 1970s and the 1980s, see Dan Banciu, "Miron Gh. Constantinescu şi relansarea sociologiei în România în perioada comunistă" [Miron Gh. Constantinescu and the relaunching of sociology in Romania in the communist period], *Revista română de sociologie*, nos. 1–2 (2018): 181–84.
[110] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 5/1977, Ion Drăgan to the Academy of Social and Political Sciences, 8 February 1977, 6–8.
[111] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 5/1977, Ştefan Costea, "Notă," 4–5.
[112] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 5/1977, "Notă," 2.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

The research built on previous attempts to devise a methodology for the study of social stratification within the "social homogenization" theory of class structure. The earliest study preserved in the archive of the Academy of Social and Political Science, dating from 1976, identified two dichotomies: between the conceptual apparatus stemming from Marxist-Leninist theory and an operational system of concepts, defined through social indicators which could be studied empirically; and between the statistical and the qualitative analysis of the growth of the working class. For a qualitative analysis, the research group proposed the concept of substructure, and the hypothesis that the growth of the working class entailed a gradual diminishing of the role of stratification (based on the remuneration of work) and a rise in importance of the socio-professional substructure (based on the content of work, especially the ratio between manual and intellectual work).[113] An alternative conceptual system, built around the issue of workers' "way of life" was proposed two years later. With it, the researchers again attempted to strike a balance between what they identified, on the one hand, as a dogmatic understanding of the concept, with some socialist sociologists simply replacing it for "mode of production," and on the other hand, the rising currency in the West of the concept of "quality of life" in the social sciences.[114]

Both studies of the working class were indebted to the main lines of inquiry pursued by the Eastern bloc research commission and reflected Romanian sociologists' attempt to produce an original synthesis of what they perceived as Western "bourgeois" and dogmatic Marxist social structure research. The first empirical study conducted

[113] ANR, ASSP–Sociologie, file 25/1976, Constantin Ionescu et al., "Procesul de creştere a clasei muncitoare şi schimbările pe planul structurii acesteia" [The growth of the working class and the changes in its structure]

[114] ANR, ASSP–Sociologie, file 15/1978, Constantin Ionescu et al., "Schimbări în structura clasei muncitoare sub influenţa revoluţiei tehnico-ştiinţifice. Sistemul de indicatori ai clasei muncitoare" [Changes in the structure of the working class under the influence of the technical-scientific revolution: The system of indicators of the working class].

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

specifically within the framework of the transnational comparative project on the social structure of socialism dates from 1979. Coordinated by Hoffman, it was carried out among 1,300 workers from Bucharest factories as a pilot-study for a broader investigation into changes in the content of work in the context of the scientific-technological revolution, particularly the gradual disappearance of differences between manual and intellectual labor. The choice of factories was particularly well suited to record a significant decrease in the weight of simple manual work through automatization. At the same time, since the study relied on workers' self-reporting, it also allowed the researchers to best illustrate the gap between the advances brought by the scientific-technological revolution and workers' subjective experiences. Many workers, the study found, felt further removed from their object of labor, and more burdened by responsibility with the increase in automatization, which contributed to their alienation, particularly among newly integrated workers with peasant backgrounds.

Researchers found that the existing system of social stratification tended to reproduce itself even in circumstances where objective advances towards the complex mechanization and automatization of labor were made. Institutionalized as a form of social control, stratification had been strongly interiorized and was being reproduced not just economically, but also socially, through prestige, proximity to leadership, etc. Even when inequalities in terms of the content of work were reduced, the projected decrease in the centrality of stratification in favor of a socio-professional structuring of the working class appeared less as an "objective law" of development of socialist society than as hinging on workers' empowerment. This was also equally clear in the workers' relationship to leadership, with respondents reporting that superiors acted upon their observations and proposals only to a very limited extent, and that this was

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

"how it was supposed to be." Moreover, the belief that workers should participate in leadership appeared to decrease with the level of education.[115]

True to the position of independence that Romanian sociologists had to maintain within the Eastern bloc research committee from the beginning of their participation, the data which Hoffman's team collected was not processed as part of the comparison between socialist countries on the issue of the relationship between manual and intellectual work. Rather, Hoffman and Honorina Cazacu, who joined forces for data collection and studied the issue of intergenerational social mobility on the same sample as Hoffman, submitted for publication by the inter-academic research commission a separate chapter on Romania. Aspects of the stratification of the working class in the other participating countries, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, GDR, Poland, and the Soviet Union, were analyzed comparatively, with a concluding study written by Tamás Kolosi and Milan Tucek.[116] Their emphasis was on the process of differentiation of the working class across four strata, intellectuals, clerks, skilled workers, and unskilled workers. They found that differentiation was more significant in terms of the objective conditions of life and work than it was subjectively perceived.[117] Taking a different approach, Hoffman and Cazacu presented data to illustrate the process by which essential differences between workers were gradually effaced, emphasizing the role of the scientific-technological revolution in increasing the ratio of intellectual labor across all categories of workers, and the role of the democratization of education and workers'

115 Oscar Hoffman, coord., "Clasa muncitoare din R. S. România. Structură şi dinamică" [The working class in the Socialist Republic of Romania: Structure and dynamic], Romanian National Archives. ASSP—Sociologie, 20/1979.
116 I was unable to verify if the volume was published, and if so in what language. Several studies translated into Romanian accompanied by a letter by Kolosi suggesting that they were prepared for the collective volume were preserved in the archive of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences. See ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 15/1983, 113.
117 ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 15/1983, Tamás Kolosi and Milan Tucek, "Tendinţe generale ale diferenţierii în rândul celor ocupaţi în industrie" [General differentiation tendencies of those employed in industry], 128.

management in driving upper social mobility. These were shown to have substantiated the theory of social homogenization, defined both as an objective "social law" and a social development strategy specific to Romania.[118]

By the early 1980s, as illustrated by Ion Drăgan, Oscar Hoffman, and Honorina Cazacu's opening presentation at the only meeting of the inter-academic research group ever held in Bucharest,[119] this understanding of social homogenization reflected the integration of the epistemic and (geo-)political dimensions of social structure research at the level of social theory. Romanian sociologists' participation at the Eastern bloc research project over the span of a decade, permanently fraught with tension, had in effect catalyzed an idiosyncratic approach to social structure research as a matter of both class and social stratification, which simultaneously vindicated the social development strategy pursued by the Romanian Communist Party. In an account of the Bucharest meeting, Hoffman translated the entire proceedings in terms of the conceptual apparatus of social homogenization,[120] not a small fit considering the focus on differentiation, diversity of approaches, and almost entire lack of theoretical engagement with the concept of homogenization among participants.[121]

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[118] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 15/1983, Oscar Hoffman and Honorina Cazacu, "Apropierea dintre clasa muncitoare şi intelectualitate în procesul omogenizării sociale în R. S. România în etapa actuală" [Drawing close the working class and intellectuals in the process of social homogenization in S. R. Romania in the current stage], 179–227.

[119] Ion Drăgan, Honorina Cazacu, and Oscar Hoffman, "Strategia evoluţiei structurii sociale în procesul construirii societăţii socialiste multilateral dezvoltate în România" [The strategy of the evolution of social structure in the process of building the multilaterally developed socialist society in Romania], *Viitorul social* 11, no. 1 (1982): 22–37.

[120] Oscar Hoffman, "Evoluţia structurii sociale a societăţii socialiste. A VIII-a Consfătuire a Comisiei de problemă din ţări socialiste, octombrie 1981" [The evolution of the social structure of the socialist society: The eight meeting of the Commission of socialist countries, October 1981], Viitorul social 11, no. 1 (1982): 163–67.

[121] On the occasion of the Bucharest meeting, Zoltán Rostás interviewed the heads of the Romanian, Hungarian, Czechoslovak, Polish, and German delegations for the Hungarian-language newspaper *A hét* (a Romanian translation of the interviews was generously provided to me by Prof. Rostás). In response to a question about the processes of differentiation and homogenization of the working class, Wladislaw Adamski expressed his lack of interest in the issue, reformulating it in terms of the standard of living and subjective life satisfaction of workers. Both him and Kálmán Kulcsár identified the precarious position of unskilled workers as a main issue of social policy. Frantisek Charvat similarly focused on the process

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

The "methodological nationalism" of Romanian social structure research, as well as the scarcity of resources in the 1980s, left little room for meaningful cooperation as the decade progressed. More importantly, as the commitment to national-Stalinist developmentalism set Romania on a path of austerity following the debt crisis in the late 1970s,[122] everyday Marxism-Leninism ostentatiously relied on national ideology to legitimate policy, a strand of discourse on the social at which sociologists were poorly equipped to contribute.[123] In the last section of this chapter, I discuss how Marxist-Leninist sociology responded to the shift in party discourse in the 1980s, as the social costs of the development strategy it had relentlessly pursued drew state socialism to an end.

5. *The "qualitative" turn*

Writing in 1983 on the main topics pursued at the Center for Sociological Research in the study of social structure, Ion Drăgan, Maria Fulea, Honorina Cazacu, and Oscar Hoffman evoked the 1979 Party Congress as having inaugurated a new strategy of intensive, qualitative development in Socialist Romania. This allowed them to formulate an unprecedented critical assessment of not just their work, but also the very processes of social development over the previous decade, with a focus on social reproduction. In the case of the working class, recruitment from the peasantry, which had occasioned numerous studies of labor integration in the 1970s,[124] was gradually

of differentiation, conceding that it would eventually lead, dialectically, to homogenization. Only Rudi Weidig emphasized the importance of the "unity of the working class," as a necessary counterpart to the omnipresent process of differentiation.

[122] For a detailed account of economic policy in the 1980s, see Cornel Ban, "Sovereign Debt, Austerity, and Regime Change: The Case of Nicolae Ceauşescu's Romania," *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 26, no. 4 (2012): 743–76.

[123] On the cultural debates on national ideology in the 1970s and 1980s, see Verdery, *National Ideology*.

[124] For a Marxist critique of the sociological literature on integration published in Romania, see Alin Teodorescu, "Evoluţia modelelor integrării sociale în cercetările sociologice româneşti" [The evolution of social integration models in Romanian sociological research], *Viitorul social* 10, no. 5 (1981): 868–

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being replaced with recruitment through education. This was shown to change both the patterns of social mobility of the working class and the main motivations for work, establishing a new system of values in which the working environment, working relations, and self-affirmation held a much more important role than before. In the case of the peasantry, aging and feminization were identified as the main consequences of extensive development, which had not been sufficiently addressed, either in previous studies or, more importantly, in practice. As for the intellectuals, very little research had been conducted, although the strategy of independently pursuing scientific and technological development was bringing their role to the fore.

Reflecting critically on their past scientific activity, the authors identified as the main problem the lack of a global sociological, demographic, and statistical model correlating class structure and social development. They argued this would have allowed the proper evaluation of the processes of social transformation, for instance, the qualitative assessment of social mobility, which had been considered exclusively positive in previous quantitative analyses of the rise of the working class. In conclusion, a new perspective on the transformation of the social structure was needed, which would focus on qualitative factors such as self-management, the scientific-technological revolution, the development of socialist consciousness and socialist values, and the role of education. As for the relationship between social homogenization and diversification, the authors conceded that the positive social function of the latter had been underestimated, while the inner stratification of classes, and the resulting social contradictions, had received unduly little interest.[125]

79. Teodorescu argued that the main sociological issue at stake in studies of industrial integration should be reformulated in terms of alienation and creative participation.

[125] Ion Drăgan, Honorina Cazacu, Maria Fulea, Oscar Hoffman, "Concepţia şi strategia P.C.R. privind dinamica structurii sociale şi de clasă în România socialistă" [The perspective and strategy of the

The "qualitative" turn in sociological, and specifically social structure research, produced uneven results. Theorizing everyday Marxism-Leninism became an increasingly unequal balancing act between the far-reaching implications of party policy and the ever-shrinking corresponding social realities. Researchers previously invested in theorization as a way to mediate between the two turned to projection and modelling as new epistemological tools. A good example for this shift is the volume on the working class and the scientific-technological revolution resulting from the studies coordinated by Oscar Hoffman at the Center for Sociological Research since the late 1970s. Published in 1984 and awarded the Academy prize, the volume differed from the research reports submitted to the academy over the years on two accounts. The original critical observations regarding the reproduction of the structure of stratification of the working class were omitted. Instead, the authors focused on projecting the future development of a "technical-scientific civilization," understood, in contrast to Daniel Bell's theory of the postindustrial society, as a new stage of industrial development. The technical-scientific civilization would be defined by the automatization of work, the increase in the amount of intellectual labor for all workers, the change in labor relations to directly involve workers in collective leadership and self-management, new strategies for professional training, and the emergence of a more creative, cultured lifestyle.[126]

The data collected in several factories where automation had been introduced was shown to validate the original hypotheses, pointing the path for the gradual realization of the technical-scientific civilization. This was not a spontaneous process, however,

Romanian Communist Party about the dynamic of the social and class structure in Socialist Romania], *Viitorul social*, no. 5 (1983): 387–405.

[126] Oscar Hoffman, Simona Raşeev, and Dinu Ţencovici, *Clasa muncitoare din România în condiţiile revoluţiei tehnico-ştiinţifice* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1984), 44–46.

but rested on conscious political decision-making. This point was further elaborated in a research report dating from 1982 but was also not included in the published volume. Hoffman revisited his own concept of "technical-scientific civilization," deeming it "unilateral and 'marginal,' as it focuses on just one aspect (and not the essential one): the modelling of society […] by modern science and technology."[127] Yet scientific and technological progress did not produce just one type of civilization, but allowed a number of alternatives, reasoned Hoffman. To reflect this, he proposed the concept of "civilization of values" instead, defined as the end-result of a development strategy in which not technology and science, but values were the most important element, representing the feed-back loop for decision-making.

Echoing the resolution of the 1982 Party Congress, which marked the decision to repay all foreign debts and pursue an independent economic policy, Hoffman identified the values at the core of Romania's development strategy as "independence and suzerainty, modernization and the creative use of traditions, balanced and harmonious economic progress corelated with general social and human progress, creativity, participation, responsibility, and wellbeing."[128] As stimulating the creativity of the masses and autochthonous intellectual production were believed to play a central role in this strategy, in the years that followed Hoffman and his team carried out studies on the role of innovation, mainly by interviewing scientists from technological research institutes, which had been recently tasked with directly contributing to production.[129] By the time their results revealing the organizational and institutional difficulties of the new strategy of technological development were published,[130] the social costs of the austerity

[127] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 14/1982, 71.
[128] Ibid., 69.
[129] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 12/1983.
[130] See especially the chapter by Dinu Ţencovici in Oscar Hoffman, Dinu Ţencovici, Simona Raşeev, and Doina Dragomirescu, *Creşterea ponderii şi rolului creaţiei ştiinţifice şi tehnice în activitatea*

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measures adopted beginning in 1982 were also becoming clear. In the introduction, Hoffman briefly reflected on the need to correlate economic production with social and ethical values, formulating a general critique of productivity pursued with disregard for the social good, as well as pointing to the possibility of social groups developing contradictory sets of values.[131] Yet, overall, theorization as a strategy for working within the framework of "everyday Marxism-Leninism," as developed in the 1970s, proved much more suited to legitimization than to any systematic critique in the 1980s. Modelling and pointing to the possibility of alternative futures is as far as the research on the scientific-technological revolution went.

At the same time, the professed investment in intensive development occasioned empirical research on topics that had only been the domain of party ideology previously. In the first half of the 1980s, Honorina Cazacu together with Ion Glodeanu and Sorin Mitulescu, both sociology graduates from the University of Bucharest (in 1972 and 1975, respectively), carried out a study on workers' self-management in several factories in Bucharest. The resulting volume produced for the first time a picture of the changing relationship between technical-administrative, political, and collective management in industrial production over time in Socialist Romania, what the authors described as authority, power, and democracy, respectively. They argued that in the 1948–65 period the subordination of technical-administrative authority to political power had been gradually transformed into a collaboration between the two, whereas in the period after 1965, and especially beginning in 1971, a system of collective management had been introduced, first experimentally, in conjuncture with the unification of political and economic roles in industrial management. Finally, after

economic-socială [The increase of the weight and role of scientific and technical innovation in socio-economic activities] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1987).

[131] Oscar Hoffman et al., *Creşterea ponderii*., 20, 22.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

1978, the focus had been on the functioning of the system of collective management under conditions of economic decentralization (self-administration at the level of factories).

Although fairly uncontroversial, this model allowed the authors to question the political justifications for the non-democratic, centralized model of industrial management (supposedly in the past), and invited further reflection on the relationship between political, administrative, and collective management beyond the level of the factory.[132] The empirical research itself resulted in a striking comparison between the normative forms of management on the one hand, and how different categories of workers perceived and desired management to function. Having introduced the concept of "climate of management" to account for the multiple factors determining workers' participation at leadership, the authors revealed the structural and organizational obstacles to collective management, particularly in terms of the circulation of information, as well as the qualitative difference between the experience of specific categories of workers, most notably women and youth.[133]

The study of the distribution of power and authority across professional categories was subsequently integrated to the social structure research coordinated by Cazacu in the second half of the 1980s. The intellectual context for her own work on social mobility shifted already beginning in the late 1970s. Cazacu reported extensively on stratification research in Yugoslavia following a study trip in 1979,[134] which then

132 The issue was raised by Cătălin Zamfir in a review of the book, in which he pointed to the complexity of the relationship between administrative and political power at the level of the factory and the higher echelons of the party and the state. See *Viitorul social* 1 (1987): 64–66.

133 Honorina Cazacu, Ion Glodeanu, and Sorin Mitulescu, *Democrația socialistă în acțiune: O perspectivă sociologică asupra conducerii întreprinderii industriale* [Socialist democracy in action: A sociological perspective on the management of industrial enterprises] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1985).

134 Honorina Cazacu, "Modalități de abordare a structurii sociale în sociologia iugoslavă" [Approaches to social structure in Yugoslav sociology], *Viitorul social* 9, no. 4 (1980): 732–36.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

occasioned a Romanian-Yugoslav conference in Belgrade two years later, on the topic of social development and social change.[135] The literature she reviewed fell into the category of what Mladen Lazič described as the "functionalist" strand of Yugoslav social stratification research, which worked with the fundamental assumption of the perfectibility of the socialist system, focused on issues of social integration, and produced generally uncontroversial results, documenting the existence of decreasing social differentiation that was not class-based.[136] Cazacu's own presentation at the 1981 conference, a reconstruction of the theoretical apparatus of social structure research in Romania with a focus on social homogenization,[137] was based on very similar assumptions to those of Yugoslav "integrative social theory." Yet whereas Cazacu argued in 1981 that the democratization of management would play a central role in further reducing social inequalities, participation at leadership had not been included, up to that point, in any empirical study of social structure.

In 1983, however, as the empirical study of collective management had been conducted, the research team coordinated by Cazacu organized a debate on the concepts of social structure, class, social stratification, and social mobility which marked a shift away from the usual focus on social homogenization. Social structure research, argued Ion Glodeanu, had not yet elaborated a theory of classes under socialism, nor conducted a large-scale, nationally representative study. To this, Honorina Cazacu added that the conceptual apparatus of social structure research had become too limited, and that the very concept of social class should be reconsidered against the vulgarization of Marx's

[135] Honorina Cazacu, "Colocviul de sociologie iugoslavo-român" [The Yugoslav-Romanian sociology colloquium], *Viitorul social* 10, no. 2 (1981): 331–34.
[136] Mladen Lazič, "Sociology in Yugoslavia: Correlation Dynamics between Critical and Integrative Social Theory in Liberal Socialism," in Ulf Brunnbauer, Claudia Kraft, and Martin Schulze-Wessel, eds., *Sociology and Ethnography in East-Central and South-East Europe: Scientific Self-Description in State Socialist Countries* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011), 96–7.
[137] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 29/1979, Honorina Cazacu, "Dinamica structurii sociale în R. S. România" [The dynamic of social structure in the Socialist Republic of Romania], 29–50.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

approach to class. The latter task was further sketched by Călin Anastasiu, who had graduated from the sociology section at the University of Bucharest in 1974 and joined the Center for Sociological Research in 1980. Anastasiu proposed that a historically and contextually sensitive re-reading of Marx's approach to class under capitalism, and of the recent Marxist literature on pre-capitalist modes of production, would result in a more nuanced understanding of how structures of domination do not simply derive from the mode of production, but are constructed through the way in which different groups participate in production, as well as through political and ideological mechanisms. "This does not mean that forms of domination do not become manifest through economic inequalities," he explained, "but just that they do not follow from *economically generated* inequalities."[138] Yet another approach, formulated by Sorin Mitulescu, suggested that the analysis of class structure should be complemented with social stratification research. He maintained this would allow the study of distortions of the class structure, for example by revealing emerging discrepancies between income and prestige, on the one hand, and the real social importance of occupational categories, on the other.[139]

In the volume resulting from the empirical studies of socio-professional and educational mobility that Cazacu coordinated at the Center for Sociological Research in the 1980s, her own analysis focused on the self-reproduction of social classes and categories, a topic she had been studying since the early 1970s. Reflecting on the trends for different social categories over the previous decades, she argued that whereas both educational

[138] Călin Anastasiu in "Clase şi dinamica structurii sociale" [Classes and the dynamic of social structure], *Viitorul social* 76, no. 5 (1983): 457. 453–79. For the full elaboration of his argument, see Călin Anastasiu, "Premise teoretice ale abordării structurii de clasă în socialism" [Theoretical premises for the approach of class structure in socialism], in Honorina Cazacu, ed., *Structură socială: Diversificare, diferenţiere, omogenizare* [Social structure: Diversification, differentiation, homogenization] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1988), 27–55.
[139] Sorin Mitulescu in "Clase şi dinamica structurii sociale," 458.

and socio-professional inter-generational mobility had been decreasing since the 1950s, it was not the decrease in itself which represented a negative development, but the fact that the self-reproduction of social and professional categories coincided, much more so than in the past, with the reproduction of the societal functions of the respective categories (specifically the division between production and management).[140] In addition, analyzing data on over 20,000 high school students from five cities, Cazacu found that the educational system played a crucial role in the reproduction and even exacerbation of preexisting social inequalities. This was the case in particular for workers and intellectuals, classes in which social reproduction was found to exceed social transfer among the youth, whereas children of peasant background were the most disadvantaged.[141]

According to Cazacu, the results of the research conducted in high schools had little echo at the Ministry of Education or within the party-state hierarchy, and the Academy of Social and Political Studies subsequently instructed the researchers to abandon the topic. The team nevertheless continued the research under the guise of a different topic, analyzing a representative national sample of higher education students in 1986–87, and presenting the results to the Ministry of Education, which requested them to repeat the study the following year on the entire student body at the University of Bucharest. Access to higher education, the research found, was highly unequal—while the social structure of the student body was proportionally the inverse of the national social structure, the distribution according to social background was especially unequal when seen in relation to the social prestige of the faculties. The fact that children of

140 Honorina Cazacu, "Mobilitatea şi structura socială" [Social mobility and social structure], in Ion Drăgan and Călin Anastasiu, eds., *Structura socială a României socialiste: Studii* [The social structure of Socialist Romania: Studies] (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1989), 183.

141 Honorina Cazacu, "Mobilitatea socială: Procese de transfer şi reproducere" [Social mobility: Processes of transfer and reproduction], in Honorina Cazacu, ed., *Structură socială*, 113.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

intellectual and clerks had much better chances of access to higher education compared to children of workers and especially peasants was interpreted as a fundamental inequality engendered by state socialism.[142]

Whereas Cazacu focused on the dynamic of social structure, Sorin Mitulescu proposed a model of social stratification based on a sample of 3,400 people surveyed between 1984–1987. Drawing on Cazacu's own definition of social class formulated at the end of the 1960s, Mitulescu defined social stratification as "an aggregate of social rules and mechanisms grafted onto existing social inequalities in the society."[143] He also distinguished between class structure and social stratification, effectively decoupling the study of social inequality from critical class analysis, addressed separately in the volume by Călin Anastasiu. Mitulescu's model of social stratification accounted for income, family size, household durable goods, educational and professional training, housing conditions, cultural consumption, position of leadership, and occupational prestige. Compared to all other indicators, the position of leadership revealed a much steeper distribution, with Mitulescu excluding workers' participation at collective management from the sample. Certainly informed by the study of workers' participation at which he took part previously, and challenging party pronouncements on the increasing role of workers' collective management, this choice was in itself political. Yet at the same time, the small number of subjects in leadership positions included in the sample also resulted in no statistically significative correlations with income, living conditions, level of instruction, or cultural consumption, and consequently no explicit argument about social differentiation according to the position

[142] Honorina Cazacu, "Inegalitatea şanselor de acces la învăţământ în România" [The inequality of educational opportunity in Romania], *Sociologie românească* 2, no. 3–4 (1991): 211–24.
[143] Sorin Mitulescu, "Stratificarea ca dimensiune a structurii sociale" [Stratification as a dimension of social structure], in Honorina Cazacu, ed., *Structură socială*, 65.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

of leadership, at the core of critical Marxist analyses of the emergence of a "new class" elsewhere in the Eastern bloc.

Overall, Mitulescu concluded that inner status consistency was "relatively low" for all strata, with workers, clerks, and intellectuals nevertheless clearly distinguishable across all the indicators of stratification, the hierarchy of stratification generally corresponding to the level of instruction, and the distance between the extremes low. The resulting picture was that of a strongly homogenized working class (almost 75% of all workers occupying a "middle position"), to which Mitulescu nevertheless added that accounting for the peasantry would increase the proportion of "semi-qualified workers." As he concluded his study, Mitulescu reflected on the relationship between class structure and social stratification: whereas class structure evolved towards the creation of the "collective productive worker," he argued, the model of social stratification showed the configuration of a diverse "middle group" of people from different socio-professional categories (workers, clerks, intellectuals) united by similar patterns of consumption, participation at decision-making, values, and lifestyle.[144] This illustrates the main contradiction at the core of social stratification research: developed as implicitly subversive to a simplified class-based perspective of social structure, it nevertheless substantiated the claims of social homogenization from which that very perspective drew legitimacy.

6. *Conclusions*

As the tables turned in the immediate post-socialist period, the inbuilt ambiguity of the conceptual apparatus of social structure research allowed sociologists to formulate

[144] Ibid., 85.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

critiques of the social processes sustaining state socialism in the very language of everyday Marxism-Leninism. In the first (and last) issue of *Viitorul social* published after the 1989 revolution, Sorin Mitulescu offered an account of the evolution of the social structure of postwar Romania: pursued by a dogmatic Marxist-Leninist party, fast industrialization and forced collectivization had led to the rapid increase of the working class from 20% of the active population in 1956 to over 50% in 1977, by which time the peasantry had decreased from 64% to 31%, and the proportion of intellectuals, carefully controlled through the limitation of higher education and as a result of emigration, had rose from 11% to barely 14%.

He identified *social stratification* with the emergence of privileged, prosperous, and generally protected social groups such as the management cadres, party activists, police cadres, and state clerks; *social homogenization* with the levelling of most of the peasantry, workers, and intellectuals to a uniform life of deprivation; and *social differentiation* with the ethnic differences and minority needs systematically denied by the communist regime. Mitulescu argued that as a result of a radical decrease in social mobility, and in educational and professional opportunities, it had been the youth, together with minorities as the most culturally oppressed groups, that had sparked the revolution, whereas workers and the peasantry were slow to mobilize and formulate their interests, and intellectuals showed a variety of responses, from militancy to apathy to opposing change. The social structure of Romania, he concluded, was heading towards diversification and differentiation, a tendency which would have to be mediated politically through dialogue and consensus-building.[145]

[145] Sorin Mitulescu, "Evoluţii în structura socială şi criza societăţii româneşti la sfârşitul deceniului 9" [Evolution of the social structure and the crisis of Romanian society at the end of the 1980s], *Viitorul social* 82, nos. 5–6 (1989): 449–53.

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As illustrated by this typical account of the social processes at work in the late 1980s, in repurposing the conceptual apparatus of social structure research, it was the simplified relationship between class, social inequality, and political power at the core of Marxist-Leninist sociology which carried through, unacknowledged, into the post-socialist period. The failure of Traian Herseni and Tudor Bugnariu's painstaking attempt to reconcile the institutional, epistemological, and political dimensions of sociological research in the 1960s showed the extent to which these had shifted in the course of socialist transformation. Neither Herseni's vision for social engineering as an apolitical technology for governance, nor Bugnariu's vision for the democratization of governance by way of expertise fit the space carved for sociological research in the second half of the decade. Instead, the institutional and epistemic setup of the late 1960s and early 1970s engendered a strategy of engagement with everyday Marxism-Leninism by way of social theory which I identified as "Marxist-Leninist sociology."

Crucially, Marxist-Leninist sociology developed not in isolated confrontation between scientists and the party, but in the transnational context of East–West and Eastern bloc scientific encounters, in which the asymmetry of power relations in the global field of knowledge production was reproduced. It was in this context that Romanian sociologists translated the party line on social development into a system of concepts drawing both on class analysis and stratification research. Even as the social costs of austerity-driven development became increasingly clear in the 1980s, Marxist-Leninist sociology did not question the role of power either theoretically (reframing the issue of class in socialism beyond a simplified, working Leninist definition) or empirically (accounting for the position of leadership within a global model of social stratification).

Consequently, the concept of class all but disappeared as an epistemological and political tool along with the Romanian Communist Party. Held fully responsible for the

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social inequalities its development strategy had engendered, in its absence it was the workers, peasantry, and intellectuals which now bore the responsibility to self-organize. Yet it was assumed that they would do so not as classes, but against the class-based perspective on society "imposed" by the party. Coming full circle, a new type of politics would correspond to a society on the path of social differentiation.

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Chapter 3. Forming the "new sociologist"

The last high-ranking Romanian defector, foreign intelligence officer Liviu Turcu, handed himself over to American authorities in January 1989. Reconstructed in dialogue with the dissident poet Dorin Tudoran for the radio Voice of America, the account of his career was broadcast in Romania over the period of the Seventeenth Party Congress in November 1989. How had a graduate from the first cohort of sociologists trained under state socialism become a high-ranking communist defector speaking against Nicolae Ceauşescu and his close circle? Almost seamlessly. This realization seemed surprising, if not suspicious, already in 1989, and has not become any more matter-of-course with the passing of time. On the contrary, the distinctions drawn between science and politics, sociological research and social theory, and civil society, party, and state—at the root of the estrangement of the recent past—have become cruder in the decades after the 1989 regime change.

In this chapter I reconstruct the development of the intellectual and professional context of academic sociology in 1960s–1970s Romania, from which Turcu's and the stories of countless others have gradually been dissociated beginning in the 1980s. Heavily based on individual narratives, the chapter is driven by the entangled dynamics of institutional, epistemic, and personal/political determinants in the development of sociology as an academic discipline and a profession. In the first section, I discuss three perspectives on the re-institutionalization of sociology "from above," and the establishing of a hierarchical institutional model reflected in the accounts of those engaged as much as those excluded from it.

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In the second half of the chapter, I show how this original model evolved over the period of one decade when sociology was taught at the University of Bucharest as a separate discipline, 1966–77. Superimposing the configuration of sociological theory and research at the university with the accounts of students who were trained at the time, I analyze two different periods in the development of the intertwined political, epistemic, and professional prospects of sociology. I suggest that the first period, in which sociology was set up as a Marxist science, saw the mutually limiting formulation of two visions for the incorporation of sociology to the party-state, later articulated by students trained at the time and integrated into research and teaching positions in terms of the distinction between science and ideology. The second period saw sociology become part of a broader project for a science of socialist governance that would synthetize socioeconomic planning, management science, and the tools of systems analysis, especially mathematical modelling and automatization. I discuss how this vision of technically-driven political decision-making reflected in students' accounts of their careers, following how the distinction between theory (social and political philosophy) and methodology (measuring) plays out in their recollections. The epilogue briefly covers the period after 1977, when the Faculties of History and Philosophy merged and the sociology department was consequently closed. I also return to the story of Liviu Turcu, putting into perspective the typical elements of his otherwise exceptional career as a sociology graduate.

1. *Perspectives on the "re-institutionalization" of sociology*

The re-institutionalization of sociology as an academic discipline, first at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Bucharest in 1966 and two years later at the universities of Cluj and Iaşi, was enabled by Miron Constantinescu. Following his unsuccessful

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attempt to push for de-Stalinization within the Central Committee in 1956 and his subsequent political downfall, Constantinescu held positions of leadership at the Institute for Economic Research and the Institute for Party History for short periods of time, and from the end of the 1950s was engaged in historical research and teaching.[1] He steadily grew in ranks again beginning in 1965, when was named deputy minister of education. Constantinescu established a Sociological Laboratory at the Ministry of Education in 1965 and coordinated the organization of the sociology department within the Faculty of Philosophy one year later. Rehabilitated in 1968 after Nicolae Ceauşescu's indictment of the political abuses committed during the leadership of Gheorghiu-Dej. Constantinescu became full professor at the University of Bucharest, and Minister of Education in 1969–70, after which he served as the first president of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences. In 1969, he was also re-named member of the party Central Committee, and at the beginning of 1974 he became president of the Great National Assembly, passing away several months later, in July 1974.

The history of Miron Constantinescu's changing political fortunes and dramatic personal life has often been told independently of his intellectual work, by force of a circular argument which deemed it insignificant in the context of the "visceral anti-intellectualism" of the Romanian Communist Party, while arguing that Constantinescu did not evolve into a critical Marxist as he was himself more interested in power than truth.[2] That the focus on high politics has rendered Constantinescu's historical and sociological work extraneous to what was considered his primarily political activity has also been the consequence of the archival source-base available.[3] Yet it has also been

[1] Ştefan Bosomitu, *Miron Constantinescu: O biografie* [Miron Constantinescu: A biography] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2014), 286.
[2] Vladimir Tismăneanu, "Portret în oglindă: Miron Constantinescu şi Milovan Djilas," in *Lumea secretă a nomenclaturii*, 238–47.
[3] The best example is Ştefan Bosomitu's detailed biography of Miron Constantinescu, which painstakingly reconstructs his political trajectory primarily from the archive of the Central Committee of

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

argued that at the root of the historiographical inability to integrate Constantinescu's political and theoretical work lay a fundamental misunderstanding of Marxism-Leninism. As a Marxist philosopher, Constantinescu's political commitment to the emancipation of the working class and the building of the communist society had been grounded in theory from the beginning; conversely, Constantinescu did not conceive science, and sociology in particular, decoupled from this political ideal.[4] While this is true of Constantinescu as much as it is of Bugnariu, a comparison between the positions from which the two were negotiating the institutionalization of sociology in 1965, as well the backgrounds of those who came to coordinate the sociology department at the university, is instructive for putting into perspective the dialectical approach to the relationship between political and intellectual practice in reconstructing the internal coherence of individual histories.

At a time when Constantinescu became deputy minister, Bugnariu's investment in personal alliances such as those with interwar experts and his attempts to curb individual abuses saw him ultimately unable to secure either the implementation of his project for the center of concrete sociology, or his position as dean of the Faculty of Philosophy. In 1965, Bugnariu was replaced by Constantin Nicuţă, following a party meeting at the university in which he was sanctioned for commenting on the lack of democracy within the party and for his intervention in support of a philosophy student

the Romanian Communist Party. Bosomitu reconstructs Constantinescu's role in the reinstitutionalization of sociology as a separate case-study, loosely connected to the book's main narrative, in the last chapter of the biography. See Bosomitu, "Miron Constantinescu şi reinstituţionalizarea sociologiei româneşti (studio de caz)" [Miron Constantinescu and the reinstitutionalization of Romanian sociology (case study)], in *Miron Constantinescu*, 327–54.

[4] Florian Poenaru, "Miron Constantinescu," in *Plante exotice* [Exotic plants] (Cluj: Tact, 2015), 238.

harassed by the Securitate and excluded from the university in a 1965 crackdown against critical attitudes towards the new party leadership.[5]

Almost the same generation as Bugnariu, Nicuţă had been a former assistant of Petre Andrei at the University of Iaşi in the interwar period, received a PhD in philosophy with a dissertation on Max Weber in 1945, and enjoyed a successful administrative and academic career in the postwar period in Iaşi and Bucharest. Recently returned to Romania following a four-year posting as ambassador in Paris, in 1966 Nicuţă became chair for the history of sociology at the newly established sociology department, and head of the department in 1972.[6] Like Bugnariu, he published very little, but is generally remembered as a charismatic and unconventional lecturer.

The chair for general sociology set up in 1966 was held by the much younger Ion Drăgan, who had studied philosophy at the University of Bucharest in 1951–55, and after graduation stayed on as an assistant until 1959. He then became inspector within the Ministry of Education, a position he held until 1964, while also teaching social sciences at the Institute for Medicine and Pharmacy.[7] In 1972, he assumed the leadership of the Laboratory of Sociology, which had been transferred to the University of Bucharest in 1968 and was initially led by Tiberiu Bogdan.

Miron Constantinescu, therefore, was never head of the sociology department, nor director of the Laboratory of Sociology. Yet there is little disagreement regarding the fact that he played a central role in the re-institutionalization of the discipline, such that he has been critically identified in the recent historiography of Romanian sociology as

[5] On Bugnariu's party sanction in 1965 as recorded in his Securitate file, see Dorli Blaga, "Tudor Bugnariu sau trădarea prietenilor în sistemele totalitare" [Tudor Bugnariu or the betrayal of friends in totalitarian systems], in *Tatăl meu, Lucian Blaga* [My father, Lucian Blaga] (Bucharest: Humanits, 2012), 208–220.
[6] "Constantin Nicuţă," in Ştefan Costea, ed., *Sociologi români*, 342–43.
[7] "Ioan Drăgan," in Ştefan Costea, ed., *Sociologi români*, 163–64.

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the "founding hero" in the "mythology of the sociological community."[8] Reconstructing how Constantinescu's role was perceived by actors who were closely engaged or invested in the first phases of re-institutionalization, in what follows I nevertheless argue that these are very diverse accounts. Rather than simply dismissing them as idiosyncratic or anecdotal, I propose that their very diversity is telling for Miron Constantinescu's approach to institutionalization as a political project.

For Constantinescu, the former high-ranking Stalinist official marginalized for his attempt at political de-Stalinization, only to be rehabilitated a decade later by one of his staunchest critics, investing in the Marxist understanding of society for the purpose of governance presented new opportunities in the context of the mid-1960s. As Nicolae Ceaușescu sought to consolidate his position, it was institution-building which held the promise of reform within the party-state hierarchy, while at the same time re-enforcing the hierarchical logic itself. Miron Constantinescu's Marxist reformist attempt to improve governance was consistent with his political dedication to the building of communism. Yet the position of power from which he projected his vision mattered, not only in terms of ensuring the necessary resources for institutionalization, but also in terms of the approach to society he modelled, based not on consensus-building but the reinforcement of political, scientific, and technical hierarchy.

The three accounts of the institutionalization of sociology I analyze, dating from 1967, 1986, and 2015, represent different genres of discourse: an article published by Traian Herseni in his permanent column, "The chronicle of sociology," from the weekly *Familia*; a fragment from a series of conversations held by Zoltán Rostás with Henri H. Stahl on the history of the Bucharest School of Sociology between 1984–87, published

[8] Zoltán Rostás, "The Second Marginalization of the Bucharest Sociological School," *Acum* 5, no. 1 (2011).

in 2000; and an unpublished oral history interview conducted by Zoltán Rostás with Ştefan Costea within the larger project of an oral history of sociology under state socialism, which Rostás started around 2011. The latest in a series of eight studies of "grassroots history" conducted with his students from the Faculties of Journalism, Letters, and Political Science in Bucharest, the project's archive contains over forty transcripts of student-led interviews and ten recordings of interviews conducted by Rostás himself, some of which I helped transcribe. Yet unpublished, the materials have been generously made available to me by Professor Rostás in June 2015 and represent the main source for the following sections of the chapter, in which I further discuss how the re-institutionalization of sociology was experienced by the students trained to become sociologist themselves. To this end, here and in the following sections I define institutionalization not in the narrow sense of setting up bureaucratic forms of organization, a task for which Miron Constantinescu's political clout and previous organizational experience fully recommended him. Instead, I conceive it as a stable, though evolving interplay between collective political practice and individual experience.

Of the three accounts of Miron Constantinescu's role in the re-institutionalization of sociology, Ştefan Costea's is the least concerned with his vision of Marxist sociology.[9] This is not unusual for the moment when the interview was taken, two decades into the post-socialist period, with Marxism having been entirely abandoned as a political language and a strand of scientific discourse after 1989. Costea did summarize Constantinescu's Marxist sociological thought on its own terms for the encyclopedia of Romanian sociologists that he coordinated in 2001, maintaining that although his work

[9] Oral history interview with Ştefan Costea, by Zoltán Rostás, 2015. Zoltán Rostás oral history private collection.

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did not coalesce into a sociological system, it was consistently Marxist, from his studies of rural impoverishment conducted in the 1930s during the monographic campaigns of the Bucharest School of Sociology, to his theorization of the tribute-based form of socioeconomic organization, to the grounding of sociology in historical materialism. Beyond the virtues and problems of his Marxist approach, Costea concluded, Miron Constantinescu's major contribution to Romanian sociology were his efforts to re-institutionalize the discipline.[10] As detailed in his conversation with Zoltán Rostás, Costea closely participated in this process. It is his account of how his career trajectory led him there that sets the tone for the rest of the narrative.

Removed without explanation from the University of Bucharest in 1958, where he had taught in the history of philosophy department after graduating from the Faculty of Philosophy in 1954, Costea was not hired for almost a year before finally becoming a school teacher of Romanian language and literature in a commune close to Giurgiu, on Romania's southern border.[11] "My arrival there was a miracle, a big thing," he remembered, at a time when there were still unqualified cadres in the district. The president of the popular council, a former shepherd disliked by the locals, was himself illiterate. He got close to Costea and asked him for help with preparing a report for a district-level meeting of the popular council. Two weeks after participating at the meeting, Costea was called to the district council and asked to become inspector for education and culture. "At that point I got scared," he explained, thinking that "It's over—they too caught me for being heretic." Yet within two years he was also made party member, and based on his work at the district level, from which he remembered

[10] "Miron Constantinescu," in Ștefan Costea, ed., *Sociologi români*, 127.
[11] The case of Costea's removal from the university is also recorded in Tudor Bugnariu's papers on his activity in the party organization at the University of Bucharest. See Fund 70 – Organizația de partid, 445–47.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

especially his efforts to build kindergartens, he was then named inspector at the regional level, and from there brought to the Ministry of Education, where he became inspector for social science education, and later head of his department.

He first met Miron Constantinescu at the ministry. Named deputy minister in 1965, Constantinescu had first "tested" Costea asking him to write a report on how a course about the Constitution is taught in seventh grade in Bucharest. This turned out to be a formative experience, that Costea recalls in detail. He wrote a critical report on the meaninglessness of teaching schoolchildren the names of the members of the Central Committee, which to his surprise Constantinescu asked him to present in front of his higher ups: "I was smaller there. […] I was shocked and nervous. I read it and said it's not ok, that was the essence." Caught between a rock and a hard spot with his superiors, some of whom had been involved in Constantinescu's removal from the ministry in the 1950s, Costea felt validated by Constantinescu: "I did this thing, he appreciated it, and from that moment on I entered working and human relations with Miron the way I never thought one can enter with another person." In his own words, Costea felt Constantinescu had from then on "adopted him."

When in 1965 the Ministry of Education was asked to submit a report in preparation for the session of the Great National Assembly on the improvement of scientific research, Constantinescu added to the report compiled by Costea that "it had been a mistake to consider genetics, cybernetics, and sociology bourgeois sciences, reactionary, idealist, etc. And the phrase passed through." Costea believed this represented the go-ahead for the re-institutionalization of sociology in 1966.[12] "I was

[12] In his speech in front of the Great National Assembly, Nicolae Ceaușescu emphasized the need to invest in scientific research at home and fully develop local capacities for innovation. The main stakes were technological and economic, with only the odd paragraph discussing "the rigid, dogmatic attitudes" which had led to disregarding cybernetics and genetics as bourgeois sciences and the "misunderstanding of the significance of sociology as a social science, denying its role in socialist society." Nicolae

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

only the servant, I was the tool," Costea often said about his role in the process, "in this whole business I was only a clerk. But one in whom he trusted. And this whole thing lasted for ten years, until he died. And I, as the son of a wretched peasant, I was never either ambitious or impertinent."

Costea helped putting together the team for the sociology department, which at Constantinescu's indications included Henri H. Stahl and Ioan Matei, as well as younger people Constantinescu coopted, mostly philosophy graduates: Ion Drăgan, Virgil Constantinescu, Aculin Cazacu, Pompiliu Grigorescu, among others. They were then sent abroad for specializations using several UNESCO scholarships which the Ministry had not utilized over the previous years. There were no other trained sociologists that could be used, Costea implied, and pressed about the case of Herseni, he maintained it was not Herseni that Constantinescu disliked, but his legionnaire political attitude.

Overall, Costea's narrative does not articulate the issue of the relationship between politics and science, which will become so central for the self-understanding of the future sociology graduates. His is the rare perspective on the institutionalization of sociology from within the party-state apparatus, identifying power with the knowledge of its workings and his own experience with Miron Constantinescu as an initiation into the system. In 1970, Costea followed Constantinescu to the Academy of Social and Political Sciences, where he remained scientific secretary for two decades, thus functioning as a mediator between the researchers and the party-state bureaucracy.

Ceauşescu, "Expunere cu privire la îmbunătăţirea organizării şi îndrumării activităţii de cercetare ştiinţifică," in *România pe drumul desăvârşirii construcţiei socialiste*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1968), 228–29.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

The account of Henri H. Stahl, dating from 1986, takes the perspective of sociology as a science of governance. Brought to the university in 1966, at the age of sixty-one, Stahl taught several courses which according to his own admission he had little interest in, until his retirement in 1970. “Even now I am convinced that the one who could have done the work was Bugnariu,” he commented on the re-institutionalization of sociology. He considered Herseni a good professor and pedagogue and himself a good coordinator of research teams, and believed that Bugnariu had understood that well and would have allowed them to play to their strengths. Bb comparison, Stahl believed Constantinescu’s approach to sociology had been misguided. He had known Constantinescu well since his student years in the 1930s, when Stahl was already a university assistant. Drawing both from the developing expertise of multidisciplinary monographic research conducted in the late 1930s and from what he described as the postwar transformation of sociology from “a social philosophy into social engineering,”[13] especially in the United States, Stahl proposed to Constantinescu to develop sociology as an up-to-date science of governance. Similarly to Herseni and Bugnariu, he envisaged the main task ahead to be the training of specialists in a new, complexly interconnected way of researching and intervening into the social reality:

> To find young and smart boys, skillful at their jobs, a geographer, a demographer, an economist, a medic, a psychologist, a jurist, a historian […] and make them all aware that their specialization is but a fragment of a larger group of sciences. You can call it sociology, if you want, but it doesn’t matter how you call it. The important thing was to gather a group of people and form them in this new mentality, of synthesis, the coordination of different specializations. Miron Constantinescu said that at that moment it was *politically* possible to open a sociology department. That if we don’t open it now there’s no way of knowing if next year we’ll be able to do it. So, we should seize the moment and start it at any cost. I regretted it. In my opinion, this did not start us on the right path. Better not do it at all than do it badly.[14]

[13] Zoltán Rostás, *Monografia ca utopie: Interviuri cu Henri H. Stahl (1985–1987)* [Monograph as utopia: Interviews with Henri H. Stahl (1985–1987)] (Bucharest: Paideia, 2000), 166.
[14] Ibid., 166–67 (emphasis in original).

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Stahl believed Constantinescu had taken inspiration from an outdated interwar educational model which offered students a general philosophical education, and thus trained not sociologists, but high-school professors of sociology. The difference from the interwar period, however, was that sociology was no longer taught in schools. Stahl also criticized Constantinescu's decision to have all students participate in field research, during one-month summer campaigns organized each year "with the aim of turning them into sociologists." "Who needed this? To whom were they useful?," he asked, maintaining that field research should have been reserved for small interdisciplinary teams of specialists.

Finally, Stahl argued that theoretically Constantinescu had merely replaced Dimitrie Gusti's system with historical materialism, without fully understanding that historical materialism was itself "an attempt to synthesize all particular social sciences," yet one that only Marx had been able to pull off.

> But a poor sociology student couldn't have this universal understanding in all fields of knowledge. One needs a lifetime to start understanding something, and then you must still be Marx to be able to master them. He [Constantinescu] didn't understand that sociology doesn't work with a team of sociologists. That you have to work in interdisciplinary teams, with different professions. This he didn't understand. And the truth is that the sociologists he trained are good for nothing. I'm very sorry I have to say it, but in my opinion, it is very clear that they are not good at anything. Professionally, they know nothing! They weren't told exactly what this is about. They were allocated wherever he could [send them]. […] He placed sociologists in industry. He placed sociologist in administrative institutions, in local state institutions. Without telling them what it was all about.[15]

Stahl's account of the institutionalization of sociology undoubtably reflects with hindsight the discipline's loss of autonomy within the university in 1977, only several years after Constantinescu's death, as well as resonates with the difficult experiences as sociologists of many of the students after graduation. By the second half of the 1980s,

[15] Ibid., 168.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

both the training of sociologists and the investment in large-scale empirical research had been stopped, which probably explains Stahl's bitterness at the opportunity wasted two decades previously.

Already in 1967, presenting the newly established sociology department, Stahl had a clear understanding of the sociologist's role having evolved beyond that of a critical theoretician, "to the point of concluding his research with a 'technical-economic report' proposing solutions for diverse problems," while also participating at their realization as a "social activist."[16] None other than Constantinescu was arguing, in the same article as Stahl, that universities under socialism "should move from training teachers to training scientists and workers in the field of culture."[17] Stahl, Constantinescu, and Drăgan agreed on the need to integrate theoretical and practical education, the latter even mentioning that the sociology department will organize students' first summer field research in multidisciplinary teams of sociologists, anthropologists, architects, urbanists, ethnographers, folklorists, geographers, etc.[18] This marked the beginning of the study of urbanization conducted over three years in three different cities and their surrounding areas under the coordination of Constantinescu and Stahl, which I will discuss in detail in the following section. As Stahl's time at the university coincided with the urbanization research project, it was most probably its failure that he identified with Constantinescu's flawed vision of sociology twenty years later. In 1967, however, there seemed to be a consensus about the configuration of the discipline, which included historical materialism as a theoretical basis, the goal of training technical experts, and the methodological approach of interdisciplinary field research. It was to this consensus

[16] Henri H. Stahl, "Seminarul de sociologie" [The sociology seminar], *Contemporanul*, 7 April 1967, 9.
[17] Miron Constantinescu, "Un învăţământ teoretic şi aplicativ" [A theoretical and applied education], *Contemporanul*, 7 April 1967, 9.
[18] Ion Drăgan, "Sociologul: Cercetător şi practician" [The sociologist: Researcher and practitionaire], *Contemporanul*, 7 April 1967, 9.

that Traian Herseni reacted in what was the only public criticism of the re-institutionalization project at the time.

In an article commenting on Constantinescu, Stahl, and Drăgan's presentation of the newly established department of sociology at the University of Bucharest, Herseni criticized their approach on four accounts. First, he argued that the curriculum did not properly integrate sociological theory and methodology. The one-semester courses on introduction to sociology and general sociology (which he assumed overlapped with historical materialism) would not be a sufficient basis, Herseni maintained, to achieve the desired integration of sciences in interdisciplinary social research. Second, with reference to Ion Drăgan in particular, Herseni questioned the expertise of those coopted to the department, specifically their lack of experience with field research. Moreover, Herseni reproached Drăgan, who quoted the French sociologist Alain Touraine on the sociologist's vocation as "not just an intellectual, an ideologue, but also a social worker," for lacking the knowledge of what the role of the sociologist was under state socialism.

His third criticism drew on the empirical studies the Institute of Psychology was conducting in Ploieşti on the scientific organization of production, contracted by the Ministry of Petroleum. Echoing his proposal from 1963, Herseni argued that actual research had proven the urgent need for sociologists, social psychologists, and industrial psychologists for "the optimal solving of *the human aspects* of enterprises." Empirical research had revealed the punctual nature of the problems which needed solving, the diversity of existing issues, and consequently the fact that sociologists would need to avoid over-specialization and rather be diversely qualified. For this reason, Herseni proposed that sociological education should itself be approached sociologically, starting from the study of the "objective needs towards sociologists on

the 'field,'" or otherwise "risk training professionals that cannot be place anywhere, while the actual needs, insufficiently known, are left unmet." Fourth and final, Herseni questioned the methodological orientation of the department, which he maintained continued "the old method, preponderantly descriptive, empirical, monographic of the 'Gusti School,' based especially on 'discussing with people,' without a substantial preoccupation for *quantification*, for the means that ensure the *fidelity* and the *validity* of research, which characterizes science in our days. Today's sociologist cannot do without *mathematical methods*."[19]

In his evaluation of the beginnings of sociological training at the university, Herseni sketched a version of the program he had elaborated together with Tudor Bugnariu for the center for concrete sociology—envisaging sociology as a science of synthesis; emphasizing the importance of expertise in understanding and responding to the problems observed through research; and projecting the development of sociology into an increasingly technical science of social engineering. From this perspective, historical materialism, bourgeois (critical) sociology, or the interwar sociological tradition were insufficient sources by themselves. What was required was an overarching vision able to integrate them, something that neither Stahl nor Herseni believed Miron Constantinescu had achieved.

Yet around 600 students were trained as sociologists in 1966–77 at the University of Bucharest alone,[20] with sociology developed as a specialization at the Universities of Iaşi and Cluj starting in 1968, as well. In what follows I discuss how the largest

[19] Traian Herseni, "Sociologul azi" [The sociologist today], *Familia* 3, no. 5 (21 May 1967): 5 (emphasis in original).
[20] This is an estimate based on available data for the 1966–71 period, when 306 students were admitted to the sociology department, and the yearly number of admitted students grew steadily, to around 70 per year. See Andrei Stănoiu and Ioan Mihăilescu, "Catedra de sociologie a Universităţii Bucureşti" [The sociology department of the University of Bucharest], *Viitorul social* 1, no. 3 (1972): 1006.

empirical research projects of the late 1960s and 1970s were conceived, and how they are reflected through the experience of former students who participated at them. In this I argue against rendering intellectual work ahistorical, both in the sense of isolating ideas from their multiple temporalities, and in the sense of downplaying the constitutive role of how ideas were "located" by different actors for their own self-edification.

2. *Urban growth processes 1966–1970 "They were forming alongside us"*[21]

When the son of a countryside history teacher hoping to follow in his father's footsteps was told by his form teacher, vice-president of the county council responsible with culture, that he should aspire for more than "embourgeoisement, becoming a teacher, and raising pigs like your dad," he applied to the newly established sociology department at the University of Bucharest. One of the four departments of the Faculty of Philosophy (alongside philosophy, psychology, and pedagogy), sociology had been allocated twenty-five spots. The exam in Romanian history and scientific socialism was competitive, with over six candidates per spot,[22] but having passed, once at the university he felt out of place. He knew nothing about sociology, while some of his colleagues were either much older than him, such as Miron Constantinescu's secretary, Teofil Roll-Mecak (b. 1931), or had had "good professors in high school who were open and had told their students about the Gusti School."

[21] For this section I rely on unpublished oral history interviews with Simona Raşeev, Iancu Filipescu, Maria Voinea, Dumitru Sandu (1966–70), Andrei Negru, Andrei Rachieru, Toma Roman (1967–71), Boiangiu Florentina, Traian Vedinaş (1968–72), Gelu Alecu, and Vlad Russo (1969–73). Not having conducted the interviews myself, I have decided to anonymize all names in the text, here and in the following two sections.

[22] Ioan Mărginean, "Începuturile unui nou parcurs al sociologiei româneşti" [The beginnings of a new course of Romanian sociology], in *Sociologia rediviva* (Bucharest: Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2016), 67

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

His situation was not unique. About half of the students admitted to the department of sociology in 1966–71 were of rural background.[23] "Everyone wanted to send their children to the city," one recalled, having applied to sociology instead of the Faculty of Letters after being warned by a Romanian teacher "not to play with such things, lest I'll become a Romanian teacher somewhere in Tulcea and curse my days and Romanian as well." The prospect of working in the countryside was so dreaded, that a student of urban working class background studying to apply to medicine switched to sociology last minute at her father's wish. Apart from reasoning that her chances at a position in the city would be higher as the first cohort to graduate from the newly established department, her father also "knew something about the Bucharest School of Sociology, and especially the implication of the Carol Foundation, the Royal Foundation, in this research; him being pro-monarchist, but this is a different issue."[24] The role of ideological commitments for the pre-communist period, indeed, should not be overestimated in students' choice for sociology. Yet many who applied certainly showed an awareness that some of those admitted would not have been able to study at the Faculty of Philosophy in the not so distant past, such as a colleague who had graduated from the theological seminary, but had not become a priest.[25] Generally, however, in the words of a student who was hesitating between applying to philosophy or sociology, more and more people thought sociology was "a discipline for the future."

The curriculum established by the Ministry of Education for the department in 1966 included fundamental courses similar for all the students at the Faculty of Philosophy, such as dialectic materialism, historical materialism, political economy, scientific socialism, the history of philosophy, and the history of Romanian philosophy and

[23] Stănoiu and Mihăilescu, "Catedra de sociologie," 1006.
[24] Maria Voinea, "Evocări şi evaluări," in *Sociologia rediviva*, 111–12.
[25] Vasile Secăreş, "A fost odată ca niciodată…" [Once upon a time], in *Sociologia rediviva*, 74.

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sociology. In addition, sociology students took Miron Constantinescu's introduction to sociology, an eight-semester course on research methods, initially taught by Henri H. Stahl, and the history of sociology for five semesters, with Constantin Nicuţă as well as Gitta Tulea and Stela Cernea, both specialized in American sociological theory.[26] From the third year on, as more professors were coopted to the department and several completed study stints abroad, courses on various branches of sociology, such as the sociology of education (Aculin Cazacu), the sociology of family (Natalia Damian; Ioan Matei), rural-urban sociology (Virgil Constantinescu), the sociology of public opinion (Ion Drăgan), industrial sociology (Septimiu Chelcea), or the sociology of population (Andrei Stănoiu) were also introduced.[27] For most students, however, the highlight was the one-month field research trip organized every year, at which they participated from the first until their third year of studies. The number of students involved grew steadily, from twenty-seven in 1967 to 231 in 1973, as did the number of locations, from Slatina and Braşov in the first three years, where the department ran its first big study on urbanization, to over ten locations across the country by 1973.[28]

"They were forming alongside us," students trained in 1966–70 say most often about their professors and the formative years of the department, a view echoed by some of the professors themselves.[29] Yet what they were learning is rarely specified, for it simultaneously stands for a now fully estranged Marxist theorization of the social,

[26] Gitta Tulea published a volume on C. W. Mills in 1972, and taught the course on the history of American sociology. Stela Cernea, who wrote a volume on Robert Merton and sociological functionalism in 1967, passed away shorly before the publication of her study on functional structuralism in American sociology in 1970.
[27] On the department curriculum as established in 1966, see Constantinescu, "Un învăţământ teoretic," 9.
[28] Miron Constantinescu, "Foreword," *Urban Growth Processes in Romania* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1974), 9–10.
[29] See Septimiu Checea, *Aşa a fost? Aşa mi-aduc aminte* [Was it like this? This is how I remember it] (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza," 2016), 118; and Andrei Stănoiu, "Cel mai mult am învăţat, împreună cu studenţii, din cercetările sociologice de teren" [I have learned the most, together with the students, from the sociological field research], in *Sociologia rediviva*, 27.

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mostly French and American specialized literature on various branches of sociology, and the embodied knowledge of field research, linking back to a selectively and critically reconsidered interwar sociological tradition.

In "Introduction to sociology," the course he held every year until 1970, Miron Constantinescu formulated the theoretical grounds of Marxist sociology. He sought to establish the discipline as a social science, and distinguish it from historical materialism, understood as the central part of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. This was not the same as the debate of the early 1960s, negotiating the emancipation of sociology from Stalinist Marxism-Leninism. Instead, Constantinescu framed his approach in the longue durée of Marxist sociology at the University of Bucharest, crediting as predecessors Constantin Dimitrescu-Iaşi for the period before the First World War and Gheorghe Vlădescu-Răcoasa for the interwar period.[30] It is equally important what Constantinescu's intellectual genealogy obscured, especially in presenting Henri H. Stahl merely as the author of "the most serious sociological work" in the framework of the Gusti School, who continued his studies on new ideologic grounds since 1955, and was integrated to the department, after significant efforts, to teach the course on sociological methods and techniques alongside Constantinescu's introduction to sociology.

In fact, as has been recently reconstructed by Ştefan Guga, Stahl had articulated in the interwar period a complex Marxist sociological synthesis drawing on the empirical research experience of the Bucharest School of Sociology, the political practice of the Romanian social-democrats, and the Austro-Marxist theoretical debates on nationalism

[30] Miron Constantinescu, "Cuvânt înainte" [Foreword], in *Introducere în sociologie: Note de curs; Partea I şi a II-a* [Introduction to sociology: Course notes; Parts I and II] (Bucharest: Centrul de multiplicare al Universităţii din Bucureşti, 1973).

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and the ethics of intellectual work.[31] In 1945–46, in the absence of Dimitrie Gusti, he held the course on Marxist sociology at the University of Bucharest, discussing at length the difficulties of the endeavor. "Marxism," Stahl argued, was "not so much a *sociological system*, but a *research method* and a method of thought," which could only be assimilated through the rigorous study of a large body of Marxist literature which was poorly systematized and mostly untranslated.[32] As he also maintained years later in his criticism of Constantinescu's vision for the sociology department, Stahl understood Marx's sociology as a complex synthesis of particular social sciences, of which he had only elaborated in detail upon political economy.

In his exposition, therefore, he focused on the epistemological value of the dialectical method as a way to critically overcome spontaneous, "common sensical" knowledge, and reconstructed the way in which it had been applied to the main topics of Marxism: the relationship between man and nature, the social division of labor, and the theory of commodity fetishism, concluding with the general theory of false consciousness, which included a reflection on the development of sociology itself. Stahl explicitly constructed his course against the contemporary simplification and vulgarization of Marxism for the sake of political expediency, advising his students, by quoting Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, that the three ways to become a socialist are: "1. studying; 2. studying; and 3. studying." Yet in the *Introduction to sociology* co-authored one year later with his step-brother, the prominent social-democrat Şerban Voinea, Stahl also elaborated on the role of sociology as a tool of social emancipation more broadly. Part social history and part account of the development of intellectual thought, the

[31] Ştefan Guga, *Sociologia istorică a lui Henri H. Stahl* [The historical sociology of Henri H. Stahl] (Cluj-Napoca: Tact, 2015), 82, and as developed in the chapter "Aventuri marxiste" [Marxist adventures], 63–89.

[32] Henri H. Stahl, *Curs de sociologie (Continuarea cursului D-lui Prof. D. Gusti), 1945–46* [Sociology course; Continuation of the course of Prof. D. Gusti, 1945–46] (Bucharest: Universitatea din Bucureşti, Facultatea de litere şi filosofie, n.d.).

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Introduction argued that sociology was the most useful science for the masses in so far as knowledge of social phenomena was necessary for all social action. Together with ethics (the pursuit of an ideal based on the knowledge of existing social realities) and politics (the techniques to achieve said ideal), it formed "one single, absolutely necessary civic discipline."[33] Made obsolete by the post-1948 Stalinization of the social sciences, which saw the adoption of a simplified Marxist-Leninist dogma on all levels of education, this tension between the scientific and civic aspirations of Marxist sociology remained unresolved.[34]

As argued by Norbert Petrovici, during Miron Constantinescu's time as president of the State Planning Committee (1949–55), sociology was dislocated from academic institutions and developed into an invisible science of the state, "a central discipline in the production of relevant information for the management and the reimagining of socialist economic development in Romania."[35] Stahl himself was involved in elaborating research instruments for systematization, specifically repurposing economic monographic methods to support planning at a local and regional level. What Miron Constantinescu most probably referred to as the work Stahl continued on new ideological grounds after 1955 was his three-volume social history of the "Romanian communal village," published between 1958 and 1965. Bracketing out of the discipline's history the immediate postwar debates over Marxist sociology, as well as the repurposing of sociological methods for state-building after 1948, Constantinescu sought to formulate a Marxist-Leninist sociology specifically adapted to the needs of

[33] Şerban Voinea and H. H. Stahl, *Introducere în sociologie* [Introduction to sociology] (Bucharest: Editura Paridului Social-Democrat, 1947), 322.
[34] See Septimiu Chelcea and Iancu Filipescu's interview with Henri H. Stahl on his eighteenth birthday, in which Stahl discusses the training of "social engineers" and the need for a broader "civic" sociological education. "Henri H. Stahl despre sociologia românească" [Henri H. Stahl about Romanian sociology], *Sociologie românească* 3, no. 5 (1992): 539–40.
[35] Norbert Petrovici, *Zona urbană* [The urban area] (Cluj-Napoca: Tact, 2017), 229.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

post-Stalinist governance. This was closer to his own Marxist studies of rural impoverishment and rural displacement from the late 1930s than to either Stalinist planning science or historical materialism. Reflecting on his experience as a field researcher and party member in the late 1930s, Constantinescu emphasized the cognitive value of direct engagement, "its decisive role in the configuration and consolidation of our *realistic* view of contemporary Romanian society."[36]

Constantinescu defined the object and functions of sociology, as well as its relation to Marxist philosophy, in three consecutive lectures. They constitute the core of what he envisaged as Marxist sociology, and are often, if at all, the only elements referred to by his former students.

> *Sociology examines the totality of social relations; the structured and dynamic totality*. As a science of the movements of society it observes and diagnoses the unfolding of social processes, of social actions and struggles. On this basis, discovering the essential and constant intrinsic relations between the phenomena of a certain social order or society in general, it discovers *social laws*, which allows it to make forecasts. By discovering social laws, it affirms itself as a *prospective* science and a science of *prognosis*.[37]

He further elaborated upon this definition in the discussion of the five functions of sociology. To the descriptive, explanatory, and prospective functions, which correspond to sociology's role in observing, discovering, and harnessing social laws, Constantinescu added:

> The most important function of sociology, however, is the *critical* function. Sociology cannot limit itself either to describing social life or to merely explaining and interpreting it. It must examine social phenomena critically, to present the conclusions of this analysis, and critical syntheses. Without a social critique, the purpose and functionality of sociology are much diminished. It must signal the difficulties of social life, the contradictions of social life in all societies, including socialist society. Sociology must not be an apologetic science; its role is to critically analyze social reality. […]

[36] Miron Constantinescu, "Cuvânt înainte" [Foreword], in *Studii şi cercetări ale tinerilor sociologi* [Studies and research by young sociologists] (Bucharest: Universitatea din Bucureşti, 1970), vii.
[37] Constantinescu, *Introducere în sociologie*, 4.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

> The last important function of sociology is the *applied* one. It is not the role of sociology to offer definitive solutions, which means sociology must elaborate certain *proposals*, hypotheses, and sketch some solutions. These proposals, these sketched solutions become decisions after they are examined by the political leadership, by the political decision-making factor. So, decisions are beyond the framework of sociology. Sociology formulates premises for solutions, proposals, studies and presents several alternatives for a problem, it can go as far as formulating practical solutions, but the role of directly applying them in social life comes down to the political factor.[38]

Finally, Constantinescu argued that "Marxist sociology is based on Marxist social philosophy, but is not identical to it," and distinguished sociology from philosophy in terms of its approach (historical, empirical, and statistical versus logical), methods, system of reference (dedicating ample space to the discussion of sociology's relation to other social sciences), object (social laws for practical ends versus the general laws of society), the use of prognosis (for social and economic planning). The only scientific sociology was Marxist-Leninist sociology, Constantinescu concluded.[39]

It was the understanding of sociology as a science studying contemporary social processes to inform party-state policies which drove the research on urbanization coordinated by the department and the Laboratory of Sociology in 1966–70. Urbanization was identified as one of the main contemporary processes of social restructuring. In comparison to capitalism, Constantinescu argued, socialist urbanization was not an end in itself, but "a component of the great process of revolutionary social transformation, which accompanies the socialist revolution and the construction of the socialist society."[40] Specifically, urbanization originated with a political decision over economic development, the industrialization of a specific area, resulting in "a complex social process, characterized in essence by a deep social

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[38] Ibid., 14–15.
[39] Ibid., 20.
[40] Miron Constantinescu, "Aplicarea teoriei grafurilor la studierea procesului de urbanizare" [Applying the theory of graphs to the study of the urbanization process], in *Cercetări sociologice 1938–71* [Sociological studies, 1938–71] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1971), 255.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

restructuring, a change from one class to another, from one profession to another, of struggle and intertwining between the rural and urban, of new correlations between social classes and strata, between generations and sexes."[41]

Large-scale social restructuring was not linear, however, but engendered its own structural contradictions, which sociologists would bring to the attention of the party-state organs to inform further policies. It is not by chance that the first research plan for the urbanization project elaborated by the sociology department was published in the journal *Probleme economice* (Economic problems), for the social process of urbanization was considered in complex interdependence with the strategies of economic development. Moreover, the comparative study of areas where the level of urbanization was high (Braşov, an old industrial center) and medium (Slatina, intensely industrialized beginning in 1965, when an aluminum factory was built) allowed for the synchronous study of consecutive stages of what was understood as one process. Vaslui, a third area representative for its low level of urbanization, was researched separately by students from the pedagogical institute in Bacău, coordinated by Mihai Merfea, and resulted in the least elaborate of the three monographs.

By most accounts, the students from the sociology department were involved in collecting data either from local institutions or through administering questionnaires. Usually, they did not participate at the elaboration of the questionnaires, and even when they helped process the data, the interpretation rested solely with the professors coordinating the research teams and authoring the published study. "I don't know how they designed the research," a former student explained, "we were just the survey

[41] Miron Constantinescu, "Concluzii" [Conclusions], in Miron Constantinescu and Henri H. Stahl, eds., *Procesul de urbanizare în R. S. România: Zona Slatina-Olt* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1970), 359.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

operators. […] We never participated at the elaboration of the [research] instrument. […] We were not at all on the command panel." Even when they were taught complex techniques, he specified, "nobody said 'Let's discuss, because tomorrow you'll be on your own, so that you know how to do something else.'" Of those who did receive guidance, a former student recalls that their group met every evening with their coordinator, Natalia Damian: "We solved the questionnaires, we analyzed if the questions were good, what needed improvement, this brainstorming was very useful." Yet having identified social processes at play in their study of families in Slatina, he explained, specifically the disequilibrium between the female and male population following the opening of the aluminum factory in the city, he found that their conclusions "had no use": "The situation was difficult in the family especially, we told Ms. Damian during the evening meetings, before dinner, and she told me that it's true, to write down these conclusions, but we cannot do more than that."

Brought up as an example meant to illustrate that Miron Constantinescu had only founded sociology for his own political purposes, this illustrates well how the epistemological and political goals of sociology, originally intertwined in Constantinescu's vision of Marxist-Leninist sociology, were decoupled. In the rare reference to the core assumption that there indeed exited social laws for the sociologist to study, one former student articulated the failure of sociology in epistemological terms:

> Of course, the topics were failed from the beginning. Let's say false. As it were, we were practicing on a plane that was never going to fly. But we saw the control panel. […] We participated, we pretended very well, we mimed everything, up to the topic—which was fake. Like the beauty of the rural-urban exodus. And we had to demonstrate how wonderfully this developed and [how] everyone is happy. It's fake, no? We transformed a directive into a spontaneous movement, let's call it social, and gave it the appearance of an objective historical movement, which was anyway fake. […] The summer research was very useful, you were preparing to be a pilot, but didn't pilot a real plane. It was

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

> made of paper, but otherwise looked the same. More precisely, you learned the methods and the style of thinking but on an invalid topic.

Many former sociologists describe the experience of field research in terms of alienation. Broken down into its parts, sociology is consequently presented either as the result and the casualty of the political misuse of power, or as fundamentally flawed epistemologically. These two sides of the same experience, when articulated together, identify Marxist sociology, as it was being done without the students' intellectual participation, as ideology. Asked if he had seen the volume about urbanization in Slatina, a student who for two years had been part of Virgil Constantinescu's team studying a newly built industrial neighborhood explained:

> I checked it out of curiosity but not much else. This was an alarm signal for me, with the eye of the neofit: the disprepancy between what I had seen on the spot and the shiny packaging, the ideological infusion, the overflowing optimism with which the information was delivered. Obviously, a reality was falsified, which tempered my enthusiasm, so that I decided deep down not to follow this path, field research dressed up in a hyper-optimistic cloth, distorting the truth; as much as possible, to avoid this. Obviously, this wasn't even our job, we just applied the questionnaires.

Sociology as Miron Constantinescu envisaged it missed a pedagogical component, relying as it were on the cognitive value of direct experience, but failing to engage students in the sociological praxis beyond the collection of data. This is put into perspective by a small number of students from the first cohorts, who attribute their formation as sociologists to Henri H. Stahl. According to his own account, upon returning from a trip to France in summer 1967, Stahl entered into conflict with the other researchers involved in the urbanization study, and with Constantinescu's consent decided to proceed separately from them.[42] He coordinated two small research teams,

[42] Rostás, *Monografia ca utopie*, 173.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

of four (1967) and thirteen students (1968), to study Slatina's suburban area, specifically the village of Curtişoara. The only woman in the first research team, who recalls having had to convince Stahl to take her along, because of the difficult research conditions, describes it as an inspiring and empowering experience. Stahl is evoked as widely knowledgeable, a good organizer, and a model of humility and work ethics, who worked closely with the students and encouraged their participation. "This working style offered you the feeling of usefulness, of your personal effort and ability," Maria Voinea recalled, explaining that "paradoxically" she had learned more from the experience of field research than from Stahl's courses and seminars: "I got a taste of research, learned how to organize and run a research project, the technique of free conversations, the pleasure of being part of a research group, the respect for the one who taught us so much, the colleagues' trust."[43]

One of his former students did mention Stahl's lectures on Austro-Marxism, but Stahl is most often credited for his teaching of sociological methods, especially the use of statistics in social research and the practice of sociological observation:

> In other teams it was simple: the professor put some questionnaires into the students' hands and sent them on the field: the research coordinators saw to their own business. In Stahl's team we truly had a workshop. We discussed daily, we presented the observation sheets. The professor commented on how the observations had been conducted, analyzed the conclusions that the observer drew, and guided us, gave us advice on how to do the observation. So, the accent was rather methodological, to train us as field observers and field analysts.[44]

Stahl also explicitly insisted that his students process and write up the material gathered during field research.[45] The resulting studies, some of which were published in a volume showcasing the work of young researchers, are specifically concerned with the

[43] Maria Voinea, "Amintiri şi gânduri… despre Curtişoara" [Memories and thoughts about Curtişoara], *Sociologie românească* 3, no. 5 (1992): 551–52.
[44] Ioan Mihăilescu, *Dialog neterminat* [Unfinished dialogue] (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2007), 51.
[45] Henri H. Stahl, "Centura periurbană" [The periurban belt], *Contemporanul*, 9 August 1968, 9.

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analytical, critical interpretation of the data collected, such as the number of electrified households as an indicator rural modernization, or the use of public transportation records to analyze commuting.[46] In this they are similar to Stahl's own chapter in the volume on the process of urbanization in the Slatina area, in which he summarized the research groups' findings on the structure of the population in the city of Slatina and its periurban area.

According to his former student Ioan Mihăilescu, the vocation of "social engineering" originating in the interwar period and advocated by Stahl was not fully compatible with the pragmatic, quantitative American sociology in which students were being trained at the same time.[47] Yet the distinction, as Stahl himself reflected upon it in 1968, was not static. He argued that whereas in the interwar period Dimitrie Gusti and his disciples formulated the need for empirical research against "a social philosophy abusively passing itself as 'sociology,'" the situation had now turned, requiring sociologists interested in solving the local problems specific to Romania's historical and geopolitical context to fight "against an empiricism which, equally abusively, passes itself as 'sociology.'"[48] Several years later, upon his return from a two-month research trip to France in 1976, Stahl gave a public presentation on the development of social engineering outside of university structures, suggesting that in Romania, as well, sociological training should be less philosophical, and oriented more towards the practical skills required from social engineers. Ion Drăgan corroborated his argument with the insight that the local beneficiaries of the sociological studies conducted by the

[46] See the studies of Maria Ghiţă and Ion Mihăilescu in *Studii şi cercetări ale tinerilor sociologi*, 59–72.
[47] Mihăilescu, *Dialog neterminat*, 18–19.
[48] Henri H. Stahl, "Păreri cu privire la actuala răscruce a sociologiei" [Opinions on the current crossroad in sociology], in Pompiliu Caraioan, ed., *Obiectul sociologiei* [The object of sociology], vol. 1 of *Sociologia militans* (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1968), 56.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

sociology department explicitly required “action plans” rather than sociological commentary at the end of research.[49]

Whereas “social engineering” as imagined by Stahl should be understood as an evolving synthesis of interwar sociological expertise, its repurposing in the postwar period for planning and systematization, and contextual positioning within the framework of re-institutionalized sociology, it was also the case that many of Stahl’s students were never in a position to practice social engineering. 37% of all graduates from the sociology department in 1970 and 1971 chose research and teaching positions, 32% jobs in factories, and 31% postings in cultural institutions, newspapers, journals, and publishing houses.[50] Governmental allocations proceeded in order of graduates’ final grade average, with students choosing from a list of available posts. Apart from the preference for teaching and research positions, location was one of the most important criteria. Many moved back to cities close to their or their spouse’s family. For those who wanted to obtain a PhD, the opportunity came in the early 1970s, when Stahl was allocated a small number of doctoral positions. He coordinated the work of several students from the first cohorts of graduates (Maria Voinea, Ioan Mihăilescu, Iancu Filipescu, Dumitru Sandu, Dorel Abraham, etc.), who continued as professors and researchers through the 1980s and held key positions in the sociological community after 1989. As one of the students who had not taken part in fieldwork with Stahl reflected: “They were the best trained of the colleagues, those who worked in Stahl’s team […]. [From it] a group of very good people was selected, people who studied and

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[49] See the transcript of his presentation and Ion Drăgan’s commentary in *Caiete de studii, referate şi dezbateri*, no. 5 (October 1976).
[50] Stănoiu and Mihăilescu, “Catedra de sociologie,” 1007n1.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

were capable, without a doubt, but also the fact that they worked with Stahl helped them become very good."

The partial way in which interwar expertise was mobilized in the re-institutionalization of sociology at the University of Bucharest is often perceived as a missed opportunity. Yet there was neither one strand of interwar sociology to be continued, nor one way to repurpose sociological expertise in the 1960s. In parallel with the urbanization project conducted by the sociology department, two other studies sought to integrate the experience of interwar empirical research. At the Institute of Philosophy, a team coordinated by Mihail Cernea conducted a comparative study of two collectivized villages, one of which, Belinţ, had previously been studied in the first half of the 1930s by researchers from the Banat-Crişana Social Institute. The village was chosen at the suggestion of Henri H. Stahl, who became a close advisor for the entire duration of the project. "The experience of researchers from the past should not be politely invoked but practically ignored," the authors of *Two villages* argued, "but must be analyzed with the necessary critical judgement to identify methods and techniques forged there, amend them when necessary, and use them within a consistently scientific conception of society."[51] By the end of the 1970s, this type of argumentation, typical of the late 1950s–early 1960s attempts at circumventing ideological orthodoxy, also targeted the selective re-appropriation of interwar figures such as Dimitrie Gusti in what was a legitimation-building drive for the so-called "revalorization of the national cultural legacy." Specifically, the choice of Belinţ challenged the identification of interwar sociology with a homogenous image of the "Gusti School."

[51] Mihail Cernea, Gheorghe Chepeş, and H. H. Stahl, eds, *Două sate: Structuri sociale şi progres tehnic* [Two villages: Social structures and technical progress] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1970), 21.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

For the 1934 monograph of Belinţ, researchers from the Banat-Crişana Social Institute had adapted Gusti's theoretical framework to study not the village in its entirety, but a single issue, identified as central to the rural world of Banat, namely depopulation.[52] In their turn, the researchers from the Institute of Philosophy adapted the method to fit with the design of a comparative research project into the diffusion of technical innovation in rural areas run by the sociologists Bogusław Gałęski and Henri Mendras at the European Center for Research Coordination and Documentation in Social Sciences (the so-called Vienna Center). Using the diachronic comparison, they challenged the project's hypothesis that rural modernization depended not on the socioeconomic system, but the individual rationality of the peasants. Using the synchronic one, they argued that the decisive factor of modernization in the case of collectivized agriculture was the efficiency of leadership, which allowed them to criticize features of socialist management such as rigid hierarchies, authoritarian leadership style, non-democratic circulation of information, and over-estimation of the role of discipline in organizations. At the invitation of Miron Constantinescu, a team of researchers from the institute coordinated by Mihail Cernea also contributed to the study of urbanization carried out by the sociology department in the Braşov area, analyzing the integration of workers of rural background through an anthropological approach to workers' dorms.[53]

[52] Together with Stahl, Cernea compiled a list of all the monographs completed before the second world war, arguing that there had been two stages in the development of interwar sociology, the first dominated by Gusti and the second by diverse adaptations of the monographic method, such as the thematic, summary, and regional monographs from the second half of the 1930s. See Mihail Cernea, "Etapele cercetării monografice a comunităţilor rurale în sociologia din România" [The stages of monographic research of rural communities in the sociology from Romania], *Revista de filozofie* 20, no. 9 (1973): 1043–1067.

[53] See Tiberiu Bogdan, Mihail Cernea, Miron Constantinescu, Petru Cristea, eds., *Procesul de urbanizare n România: Zona Braşov* [The process of urbanization in Romania: Braşov area] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1970).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

During the same period, at the Institute of Philosophy Traian Herseni organized a research team which included some twenty collaborators from the academy and the Faculties of Psychology and Philosophy at the University of Bucharest, such as Georgeta Dan-Spînoiu, Ligia Gherguţ, Septimiu Chelcea, Nicolae Radu, Cătălin and Elena Zamfir, Pantelimon Golu, and Mihai Golu. They studied the social psychology of the inhabitants of Boldeşti, a village where an oil derrick had been constructed in 1929. At the time, the village was of interest as it was becoming a town, officially reorganized as Boldeşti-Scăeni in 1968. The resulting volume was published at the same time as the studies of urbanization in the Slatina-Olt and Braşov areas and is the closest approximation of what the recreation of interwar research practices for the study of socialist transformation entailed. Herseni's method required researchers' immersion into the village life for extended periods of participant observation, a genealogical study of its population using a method developed by Henri H. Stahl, as well as close collaboration between researchers throughout the project, from its inception to publication.[54] Yet compared to the volume on the urbanization of Braşov, which had a similar anthropological bent, and drew heavily on French and American industrial social psychology, the study of Boldeşti ultimately lacked in what one would call, in the parlance of late 1960s, "sociological imagination." The first years after the re-institutionalization of sociology are often described as "improvisational," especially by students who perceived their professors as "learning alongside them," and indeed much of the work relied on experimentation, the use of eclectic sources for both theory and methodology, and the creative negotiation of constraints—with regard to data, access, or expertise. In comparison, given his own lack of space for ideological maneuver,

[54] Traian Herseni, ed., *Industrializare şi urbanizare: Cercetări de psihosociologie concretă la Boldeşti* [Industrialization and urbanization: Studies of concrete psycho-sociology in Boldeşti] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1970).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Herseni's attempt to apply the expertise of the Bucharest School of Sociology reads as purposefully self-limiting. Yet unlike the opportunity to learn from an experienced sociologist such as Stahl, the relative advantages of an ideologically "proper" education often remain un-acknowledged by the sociology students from the second half of the 1960s.

Fifty years later, there is little agreement among them about what Miron Constantinescu's intentions had been in building up a Marxist sociology from scratch at the height of "reform socialism" in Romania: to firmly establish sociology on political-ideological grounds, as a strand separate from both the Gusti School and Western sociology; to emancipate sociology from ideology, where ideology is identified with historical materialism; or to provide a Marxist framework for a diversity of approaches, from the Marxist theoretical to the empirical. As explained by Maria Voinea, who Constantinescu asked to take over "Introduction to sociology" after graduating in 1970: "I cannot hide that Professor Miron Constantinescu […] in the 'Introduction to sociology' course also made references to Marxist ideology: I have to say that he considered general sociology to be historical materialism and the sociological branches to be pure sociology. Fieldwork, in his view, was what completed this science. Which is correct. It stayed in my head since then."[55] The fact that a synthesis between the three never became a workable model is best reflected by former students' interpretation of the critical and applied functions of sociology, which often structure their accounts of their own careers after graduation, or of the fate of sociology under state socialism more generally. Fully isolated from the Marxist-Leninist premise that society is structured by social laws the knowledge of which is both possible and

[55] For the three positions as articulated by Dumitru Sandu, Ioan Mărginean, and Maria Voinea, see "Evocări şi evaluări," in *Sociologia rediviva*, 121–22, 119, and 112, respectively.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

desirable as a tool of governance, the critical and applied functions of sociology are often translated in terms of the relation between science and politics. On the one hand, the critical function of sociology is believed to be premised on its autonomy from politics; on the other, sociology's failure to produce change is explained by the inability of political power to incorporate science. Differences in social background, career trajectory, and intellectual formation produce so many variations on what Constantinescu had originally described in no unclear terms as sociology's critical role *as* a science integrated to power.

A graduate who worked for two years as an editor at the documentation center of the Academy for Social and Political Sciences and lost her job unexpectedly when the center was disbanded without any explanation, reflected: "If this would have happened to me later the shock would have been even greater. Back then I was young, and it wasn't the end of the world, although jobs for sociologists were not everywhere, and many of the colleagues in my cohort worked in personnel." Instead of becoming a clerk, an outcome many sociologists dreaded, she transferred to the Center for Sociological Research, where she worked until her retirement in the early 2000s with Oscar Hoffman. Looking back on her career under state socialism, she formulated the tension between science and politics in terms of having made the compromise of not openly opposing power for the sake of doing one's job: "I was a party member, but I never had political positions, I did this only for the sake of the job, because the social sciences were something special at the time. What you as a person believed nobody cared and it was worth nothing, but formally you could not do your job if you were not a party member."

Outside the small sociological communities which formed after graduation at the university and in a small number of research centers across the country, isolated

graduates perceived the realities of sociological practice and of ideological constraints as a counterpart to the idealist vision of sociology as a critical discipline. A former student who wrote his diploma paper about the sociology of sport and recalled Constantinescu commenting at his defense that "while the country is preoccupied by important phenomena—industrialization, urbanization—you deal with trifles," worked as a factory sociologist for several years before realizing "they might have wanted a sociologist but they weren't interested in actually applying the [sociologist's] proposals." Transferred in the second half of the 1970s to a medical research institute, where he worked until the early 1990s, he enjoyed having "a lot of time to read" and developed an interest in literary criticism, a field in which he started publishing in the early 1980s. "Sociology had become an apologetic science," he explained echoing Constantinescu, "and the only area where you could activate the critical function, which was the main function of sociology, was literary criticism. So, my refuge can be explained like that." Looking back on his time at the university, he contrasted the optimism of the first years after the discipline's re-institutionalization, with the reality of its ideological limitation: "We all hoped that it is becoming an important science; that we count; that the decision makers will care about our conclusions. So illusions, an entire utopia, fueled—because nobody made us aware and maybe even our professors didn't guess that sociology is useful only as an ideological annex and nothing more. […] Or—it should criticize socialism."

For those with complicated family backgrounds, the contradictory appeal of sociology as the product of a period of unpredictable cultural liberalization was clear from the beginning. As a high school student preparing in mathematics and physics, one recalled, he read *The Phenomenology of Spirit* out of an interest in history, understood nothing, but was left with the belief that one needs "to arrive at—that which is illusory, no?—

absolute knowledge." He had the intuition that the sociology department might be a place to obtain a philosophical education and deepen one's knowledge of history. Sitting on the admission committee, Henri H. Stahl offered him a copy of his study on the necessity to sociologize history, and over the years became his intellectual mentor. His parents however had made it made clear, uneasy with his choice for a predominantly ideological field, that he could only go with the condition "not to engage in political discussions." Members of his extended family had been sent to forced labor in the 1950s, at the time one heard about people returning from prison, so he felt fortunate to study at a time of liberalization, when one could choose not to engage in political activities. "The sociological studies were of course conducted rigorously, they didn't have something ideological," he reflected on his time at the university, first as a student and after graduation as a researcher at Laboratory of Sociology. "The interpretation could be Marxist, but generally, and under the eye of Stahl, we were leaning towards sociography. Nowadays, one might find this surprising, but there was no explicit ideological implication, you were describing what was going on."

For him overt criticism had never been an option, he explained, reflecting on the role his social milieu had in forming his attitude, on the fact that he neither had the character of a hero nor the backing that would have allowed him to play this role, and on the reality of being responsible for the existence of his family. He kept away from the group that had formed around Tudor Bugnariu, who he knew from private conversations to be very outspoken in his criticism of Nicolae Ceauşescu. Among peers, who were discussing in "a conspiratorial tone and often codified," he concluded that "we should not exaggerate, but the spirit was anti." In research, however, he aspired to Weberian "objectivity." After the death of Miron Constantinescu, as the Laboratory of Sociology was being relocated, he transferred to the Technical University, were he taught for over

forty years, while pursuing his own research interests in social history, which he had chosen as "an area in which I wouldn't have to deal with ideology." He concluded, echoing the accounts of several other students from the first cohorts of students of the sociology department, that "you could do your job, in a sober tone and a tone in which the ideological element is subdued," and that criticism from the part of sociologists was at most indirect.

3. *Scientific management 1970––1976 "I had more of an inclination towards measuring than the philosophy of measuring"*[56]

In January 1975, the newspaper *Viaţa studenţească* (Student life) published the story of Tel (Constantin) Lămureanu. After graduating from the sociology department in 1974, he had been allocated a post at the Office for Labor and Social Protection in Tulcea. "When I went there, there was no post," he explained, "they suggested I look for a sociologist position anywhere in the county, but despite the goodwill of everyone there, I couldn't find one." After working temporarily in a job at the Popular Council that had nothing to do with sociology and for which he was overqualified, the office approved his transfer to any institution where he would be hired as a sociologist. "They tried many solutions, they offered me material conditions (a studio), only the job didn't pan out. Because there are no clear regulations regarding the sociologist profession. So, I'm looking for a job. Maybe somebody will write to you about one. But only as a sociologist," he concluded his story.

[56] Section based on unpublished oral history interviews with Vlad Russo (1969–73), Călin Atanasiu, Cornel Codiţă, Alin Teodorescu (1970–74), Dumitru Borţun, Radu Toea, Mihaela Dima Varga (1971–75), Cornel Constantinescu, Aurora Dumitrescu, Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu, Roşu Marin, and Ioan Păscuţă (1972–76), Petre Duţu (1973–77).

The reporter confirmed with the Office for Labor and Social Protection in Tulcea that Constantin Lămureanu had indeed been allocated to a position that did not exist. Inquiring with the Ministry of Education, he was told the allocation was made based on a list of available positions that the State Planning Council had prepared. The State Planning Council, in its turn, responded that the post was added to the list because the Popular Council Tulcea communicated there was an available position for a sociologist at the Office for Labor and Social Protection, thus closing the circle.[57] The case of Constantin Lămureanu was not unique. "Winging it" (*a se învârti*, literally to spin oneself), as a factory personnel clerk put it, meant making do with the specialists one was allocated—that is, hiring them in the jobs they were needed for, regardless of their specialization.[58] The added irony of the case of Tel Lămureanu was that his very job, in theory, would have been to improve this situation.

In 1970, when Lămureanu started his studies after transferring from the Faculty of Physics, sociology was at its peak. The number of publications alone had almost doubled from the previous years, to over 400, partly in preparation for the 1970 World Congress of Sociology in Varna, the only ever organized in a socialist country. This number was only equaled in 1972, when the sociological journal *Viitorul social* (Social future) was launched, and in subsequent years it steadily declined to an annual average of less than 200 for the 1978–89 period.[59] 1970 was also the year when mathematics was added to the admission exam for the sociology department, which former students often explain had been decisive for their choice:

> It was something new. You looked at the university not like a fixed center of interest, but a tunnel through which you exit somewhere else—a profession.

[57] Aurel N. Testu, "Cine ştie un post?" [Who knows of a job?], *Viaţa studenţească*, 15 January 1975, 4.
[58] Sorin Tomşa, "Discuţie despre sintagma: 'M-am învârtit şi eu'" [Discussion about the expression: "I winged it"], *Viaţa studenţească*, 19 February 1975, 4.
[59] See Table 9.1. in Cătălin Zamfir and Iancu Filipescu, eds., *Sociologia românească, 1900–2010: O istorie socială* [Romanian sociology, 1900–2010: A social history] (Cluj-Napoca: Eikon, 2015), 106.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

> And the question was "What will you do after?" From the Academy of Economic Sciences, you ended up in a factory, working in accounting. You realized this and thought… sacred mediocrity. […] Engineer… sent to a factory. Suddenly, sociology was an entirely different prospect. First of all, nobody knew very well what there is on the other end of the tunnel, in what area and what you will do. You had a vague idea, but it wasn't very clear, so there was still territory to explore.

Compared to previous years, social statistics, mathematical analysis, and the theory of probabilities became more central to the curriculum, reflecting the mathematization of the field more broadly. Beginning in 1972, the department was also restructured into three specializations, which students could choose from beginning in their third year: industrial sociology, urban-rural sociology, and the sociology of culture. It was the two tendencies, mathematization and specialization, which defined sociology in the first half of the 1970s, as illustrated most poignantly by the development of the concept of "urban area." No longer teaching at the university, but head of the sociology section of the newly established Academy of Social and Political Sciences, Henri H. Stahl envisaged research into urban areas as an instrument meant to inform decision-making at the local and central level, especially in issues of systematization. As he explained in December 1971 to a group of researchers in Iaşi, sociologists should aim to provide technical-economic projects for the development of the researched areas, to be either approved or rejected by the party. This was a highly technical job, especially by the nature of the instruments used, foremost the computer:

> After the topic is determined, we have to find the indicators, after that we have to fix these indicators, after that we must show what we can count, what we can measure, what we can evaluate, so that we can put the computer to work. Right now, the main critique we have for Romanian sociology as a whole is that we haven't yet reached this level. Very interesting studies but you ask yourself: What do I do with them? I go to the computer to work with modern techniques. Can I? I can't. Because I don't have the elements needed by mathematicians to do their jobs. It is indispensable to use these mathematical methods.[60]

[60] Henri H. Stahl in "Stenograma dezbaterii conceptului: sociologia de zonă cu aplicaţii la cercetarea zonei Bahlui-Iaşi" [Transcript of the debate on the concept of area sociology with applications to the study of the Bahlui-Iaşi area], ASSP-Sociologie, file 20/1971, 11.

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As became clear in the course of the discussions about the Bahlui area, however, in practice systematization proved very difficult to coordinate. Plans had been developed in parallel with the studies by geographers, medical statisticians, and sociologists, and had already been approved. Research proceeded slowly and with limited means—access to the computer at the University of Bucharest, for example, was costly. At the same time, projects for the development of the area, in spite of the systematizers' own reservations, needed to be submitted. Yet these, too, were rarely applied, for they were often made obsolete by party directives known to the local party secretary or other persons in charge. The issue, in short, was not only epistemic (how to integrate the insight of different disciplines), or technical (how to translate research into operational projects), but was an issue of decision making, as well.

Stahl addressed the epistemic problems of area research in a public debate organized by the Laboratory of Sociology in 1973. In the first half of the 1970s, the department continued to conduct research on the process of urbanization, most notably in the Argeș area. The resulting studies reflected the specialization of those involved, either the sociology of population, with a focus on mobility (Andrei Stănoiu), family sociology (Natalia Damian), or industrial sociology and methodology (Septimiu Chelcea). Yet in order to avoid the pitfalls of the Slatina project, Stahl argued, and produce not a multidisciplinary volume about urbanization, but an interdisciplinary theory of urbanization, these studies would need to be synthesized in a comprehensive analysis of the economic structure and superstructure of the area. The response of the head of the department, Ion Drăgan, is illustrative for the department's orientation in the 1970s. Following the first phase of the urbanization study, which sought to formulate a unitary perspective of the social processes studied with more or less success, in the new stage of research the focus had shifted to specialized, in depth analyses of particular issues,

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

which though less coordinated were scientifically more valuable. "We stepped in a phase of specialization and diversification of research," Drăgan concluded, noting that this was in line with the trajectory of sociology internationally, and convinced of its positive effect both in terms of training the students and in terms of the scientific results.[61] Stahl continued his studies of urban areas in the mid-1970s in collaboration with the Center for Urban Sociology in Bucharest, focusing on the "technical" aspects of sampling in area research—that is, the development of methodologies able to reflect both the theoretical insights of Marxist social history (such as the theory of Romanian communal villages) and the practical needs of planning and development.[62]

Meanwhile, the issue of mathematization in the analysis of social processes was taken up, also outside the department, under the coordination of Miron Constantinescu. The systemic problems related to commuting, workers' integration, and labor turnover analyzed in the studies of urbanization conducted in the Slatina and Braşov areas were not going to be solved by sociologists alone. As Miron Constantinescu explained during a public meeting of the Laboratory of Sociology in October 1973, the beginning of the 1970s saw the first attempts to obtain "a scientific image of the workforce resources and their distribution in all the counties of the country," which was to make it possible, on the long run, to plan labor migration flows as well. This followed from the decision of the Central Committee to proceed with compiling workforce balance sheets at the county level, starting with the experimental application of a methodology compiled by

[61] Ion Drăgan, in "Cercetări sociologice în zona Argeş" [Sociological studies in the Argeş area], *Caiete de studii, referate şi dezbateri*, no. 9 (1973): 76.
[62] Henri H. Stahl, "Comentarii la problema eşantionării zonale" [Comments on the problem of area sampling], *Caiete de studii, referate şi dezbateri*, no. 3 (1975).

the Labor Ministry, the State Planning Committee, and the Central Statistical Office in Gorj county in 1972, and then adopted in all counties in July 1973.[63]

On the model of the Gorj experiment, Miron Constantinescu coordinated a "sociological and political experiment" in Dolj county, beginning in the summer of 1973. Building on sociology's role in critically informing decision making, as formulated in the second half of the 1960s, the early 1970s saw the discipline increasingly involved in a broader reformist drive which targeted the issue of socialist management itself. The experiment was a collaboration between the Laboratory for the Study of Management Science and the Central Institute for Management and Informatics in Bucharest. The former had been established in October 1971 by Constantinescu, then rector of the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Academy and president of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences, and in its first years elaborated a curriculum for the course "Introduction to the science of management of the socialist society," taught at the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Academy.[64] The experiment conducted in Dolj sought to design an informational system equipped with tools for the automatic processing of data to support decision-making at the county level in issues of planning.[65]

To begin with, a series of cybernetic models elaborated for the micro- and macro-economic levels[66] were adapted by a research team at the Central Institute for

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[63] Miron Constantinescu, "Experimentul sociologic şi politologic din judeţul Dolj" [The sociological and politological experiment in Dolj County], *Caiete de studii, referate şi dezbateri*, no. 12 (October 1973): 7–8.

[64] Sergiu Tamaş and Ion Iordăchel, "Realizări şi perspective ale centrului de studii pentru problemele ştiinţei conducerii societăţii socialiste" [Achievements and perspectives of the research center for the problems of the science of management of socialist society], *Viitorul social* 1, no. 3 (1972): 1010–1019. The first two lessons of the course were published in vol. 5 of *Caiet documentar. Şiinţa conducerii* [Documentary bulletin: Management science] (Bucharest: Academia "Ştefan Gheorghiu," 1972).

[65] "Experimentul Dolj" [The Dolj experiment], *Viitorul social* 2, no. 4 (1973): 836.

[66] For the cybernetic models used, see Paul Constantinescu, "Caracteristici principale ale concepţiei de proiectare a sistemului informatic teritorial" [Main characteristics of the concept for projecting the territorial informatic system], *Caiete de studii, referate şi dezbateri*, no. 12 (1973): 25–59. In the discussion of the presentation it was explained that the experimental application of the model at the

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Management and Informatics, resulting in the design of an informational system for territorial planning.[67] This was a political, not an economic model, Constantinescu insisted, the focus being not on the mechanism of planning, but on the decision-making process, especially the relationship between the county and the central levels.[68] Once the preliminary cybernetic model was completed, the role of the sociologists involved in the project was to elaborate a series of social indicators for planning, and theorize how they correlated with economic and technical indicators, in a shift from "economic accounting" to "social accounting."[69]

The project opened an ample debate on the issue of social indicators, which resulted in the articulation of three approaches: Ion Iordăchel, head of the sociology department at the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Academy, proposed a functional series of twenty-six social indicators specifically designed for the purposes of the Dolj experiment, and the practical needs of local political administration;[70] Pavel Apostol, drawing on the critical futurological literature of the early 1970s, which articulated social prognosis as a corrective to economic-driven development, argued that social indicators should be designed to reflect a specific social goal, namely the "quality of life";[71] whereas the Central Statistical Office prepared a system of social indicators for internationally compatible macroeconomic planning, most notably with Robert Stone's system of social and demographic statistics designed for the United Nations Statistical Office in

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county level, even for one issue—such as the classification of population—was severely limited by the technology for data storage available.

[67] Paul Constantinescu and Liviu Oprescu, "Tehnici şi metode folosite în experimentul Dolj" [Techniques and methods used in the Dolj experiment], *Viitorul social* 2, no. 4 (1973): 847–55.

[68] Constantinescu, "Experimentul sociologic."

[69] Sergiu Tamaş, "O cercetare-pilot în domeniul ştiinţei conducerii societății" [A pilot-study in the field of the scientific management of the society], *Viitorul social* 2, no. 4 (1973): 840.

[70] Ion Iordăchel, "Consideraţii preliminare privind alegerea indicatorilor sociali necesari 'experimentului Dolj'" [Preliminary considerations regarding the choice of social indicators necessary for the "Dolj experiment"], *Caiete de studii, referate şi dezbateri*, no. 11 (1973).

[71] Pavel Apostol, "Probleme actuale ale prognozei sociale – calitatea vieţii şi indicatorii sociali" [Current problems of social prognosis: Quality of life and social indicators], *Caiete de studii, referate şi dezbateri*, no. 14 (1973).

1973.[72] No longer the primarily institutional and epistemic issue that the "systematization" of the social had been for Traian Herseni and Tudor Bugnariu almost a decade previously, the detailed mappings of social indicators formulated in the first half of the 1970s came closest to the reflection and synthesis of social realities for the "technical" purposes of planning and state administration.

The Dolj experiment was even further removed from the experience of sociology students from the University of Bucharest than the study of urbanization in which they had mostly been employed as interviewers. Beginning in 1974, however, as all graduates of higher education were required to work "in production" for three years before applying for research positions or for teaching positions in higher education,[73] several cohorts were allocated to posts in local state administration—especially county popular councils and labor offices, reflecting the shift towards sociology's assimilation to issues of planning and scientific management. As in the case of Lămureanu, however, it is unclear how these positions were created. If similar struggles with integrating graduating students from the philosophy section are any indication, it involved direct intervention at the local level to access the posts initially "hidden" from planners.[74] Yet this did not mean that the students would actually work in the jobs they were allocated, as attested by the accounts of graduates who received or negotiated a "negation" from their post (the employer's rejection of a person they were allocated). Those sociology

[72] Direcția Centrală de Statistică, "Propuneri privind sistemul de indicatori sociali pe ansamblu şi în profil județean - Studiu preliminar" [Proposals regarding the system of social indicators on the whole and at the county level: Preliminary study], *Caiete de studii, referate şi dezbateri*, no. 17 (1973).

[73] The new regulation, initially passed as a Decision of the Executive Political Committee, became Decree no. 54/1975 regarding the repartition in production of full-time students graduating from higher education institutions, then Law 22/1975.

[74] Tudor Bugnariu comments in his diary, in the context of the faculty's reorganization in 1977, on its expansion over the years much beyond the capacity to integrate graduates in posts according to their specialization. In a year when he received twenty-seven posts for eighty students, Bugnariu recalls, he intervened with Ilie Murgulescu, who called all county general inspectors to Bucharest and "extracted from them sufficient hidden jobs to allocate everyone. But I knew that next time we won't be able to obtain as many posts." Tudor Bugnariu Fund, file 44/II, 176v–77.

graduates who were initially received with interest by directors of factories or local administrative institutions who they described as “open-minded” share very similar stories: encouraged to conduct sociological studies on issues which they themselves identified, of which the most pressing was usually labor fluctuation, they found that their studies had limited impact and that the interest in them subsided, to the point that they were gradually edged out into positions they felt did not reflect their training, becoming clerks in the institution’s office for personnel. This is often mentioned as the worst-case scenario by those sociologists who ended up in research positions, and not in factories or administrative units, yet the individual stories are often more nuanced.

As recalled by a former student, when he and a fellow colleague arrived at their post at a major enterprise in Bucharest, the head of personnel, “an old activist,” greeted them with disbelief: “–What are you? –We are sociologists –Huh? What’s that? –We studied sociology, we have allocations. –What allocations? We asked for engineers, economists, etc.” He sent them away, but after they intervened at the mayor’s office, which had allocated them to the enterprise over the head of the personnel office to begin with, the situation was resolved. For their first sociological study on labor force turnover, which was about 100% yearly, they were congratulated by the director, asked to explain their findings to the managers and advise them on possible solutions, and also received a bonus: “Everyone was amazed. They hadn’t seen bonuses, especially for new people—sociologists who nobody knew what they did.” Even as they gradually switched to organizing training courses for the enterprise workers, he felt they were treated with respect and that their job was valued: everyone addressed him as “Mr. Engineer, without exception. They knew we are different. We behaved differently, we talked differently.”

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A graduate hired as a sociologist in a small factory recalled being warned already during her studies by Septimiu Chelcea that "when the sociologist is sent out the door, he must come through the window." Initially tasked from the personnel office with organizing professional qualification courses, she asked the factory director to allow her to conduct sociological studies. "I had an ambition," she explained, "that if I graduated from this university, at least I should not forget [what I learned]." She studied issues of labor fluctuation and labor satisfaction and found, as she was doing participant observation at all the stages of production and talked with the workers, that "the very fact that you were there with the people improved things." She started conducting qualification courses and training after giving birth, when, as she explained, the factory management had been very accommodating and allowed her to work part-time. When in 1989 she applied for a sociologist position that had opened in a much larger factory, and similarly studied the issue of labor turnover, she discovered "the fragility and also the cruelty of the system." With a complicated hierarchical organization and a shocking contrast between upper management and the workers in terms of working conditions, her evaluation of the disastrous situation was very poorly received: "They would have wanted me to find a guilty foreman," she reflected with bitter irony.

It was, indeed, the issue of decision-making and leadership that other sociologists report to have been off the table in the organizations in which they worked. Yet perhaps the most telling example is that of the student who chose sociology out of a sense of possibility and expectation, which he felt that the traditional technical professions could not offer. He described his time at the university as one of intellectual and political empowerment: Marxism, and especially reading the original texts, offered him the conceptual instruments for self-reflection; Stahl and Constantinescu formulated the perspective of social engineering; and Mircea Malița and the school of applied

mathematics created bridges between mathematical modelling and the research of social phenomena. He experienced the late 1960s and early 1970s as a time of political affirmation of a new generation, and saw his colleagues split, as an echo of the 1968 student movements, into a group which embraced the idea of radical rupture and art as a privileged territory of expression, and those who believed "you have to stay inside and do what needs to be done, do better than what was done before you, do it differently and convince others that it must be done differently, for god's sake." The ideological tightening around 1971, he recalled, had been a shock to many socialized during a period of cultural and political liberalization, yet overall he described a generation which felt privileged for having had access to ideas that seemed unthinkable outside the university.

It is against this background that he recalled the experience of his first job posting: "Suddenly we graduate and our potential for professional integration is close to zero. Constantinescu dies; when you get an allocation, you go there and there's nothing, the people there haven't even found out that they invented a job for something like this." He had chosen a position at the Popular Council in Craiova, which was the very county seat of Dolj, where the political experiment coordinated by Constantinescu had been conducted one year earlier: "I go there, and I'm told: You don't have anything better to do? You don't want to do something in life? There is nothing here, it's a fiction… essentially this is what I was told." Instead, he pursued sociological research at the Center for Historical Research and Military Theory, initially as a civilian but after 1977 joining the military ranks. He gradually oriented himself towards geopolitics and military theory, using systemic modelling to analyze the arms race for his PhD. His choice was not unusual at the time. In fact, cadres from the army were also given the opportunity to study sociology in the first half of the 1970s, most probably as part of

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

the same drive for professionalization which occasioned the spectacular expansion of research in the field of scientific management at time. The accounts of the two graduates sent to study sociology by the army suggest that there was initially an interest in applying their expertise in the practice of military recruitment and training, from teaching scientific socialism to surveying and proposing ways to improve the experience of the youth in the army, but by the late 1970s they had been integrated to a research group at the Military Academy where they pursued mostly theoretical topics. Despite the similar dying out of the possibilities for applied sociology, the army represented an exceptionally stable institutional framework.

Where the institutional integration of the political, intellectual, and professional aspirations of sociology graduates from the 1970s was not entirely possible, the accounts of their career trajectories play out in terms of the contradiction between Marxist theoretical engagement, the political realities of state socialism, and the technical aspects of sociology. It was the appeal of the protest movements in Western Europe, the critical Marxism of the New Left, and the increasingly global perspective of socialism which framed the political engagement with issues of social philosophy and critical political theory in the early 1970s. "I was neither opportunist, nor communist," a former sociology student defined his political outlook at the time, reconstructing it against post-socialist reductionism: "It was in the spirit of the time the idea that history must enter a new phase. And the regression of Ceaușescu was seen as an accident, not as a structural characteristic, as it is considered today, when communism is seen as diabolical, there is no way out of communism, communism and Stalinism are identical, etc." Beyond the concerns of local politics—be they Ceaușescu's response to the Prague spring or the so-called mini-cultural revolution of 1971—he saw his political motivation at the time animated by a global perspective that

extended from Portugal and Greece to Vietnam and Chile, at times through the very contact with student refugees enrolled at the University of Iaşi, where he obtained his degree. This coalesced into a vision of global development which he described as "a sort of convergence at the level of democratization," with socialism a legitimate historical path. He considered sociology, as practiced by the generation trained at the end of the 1950s–beginning of the 1960s, as "politically discredited, a discipline too obedient ideologically." Instead, he dedicated himself to literary criticism as a privileged medium for intellectual debate. He only identified with the discipline beginning in the 1980s, when he was hired at the Center for Sociological Research in Iaşi and started working on literary sociology, inspired by contemporary French critical sociology, and especially Pierre Bourdieu.

A role similar to literary criticism, although on a much smaller scale, was played by critical political philosophy, as pursued by several sociology graduates from the University of Bucharest in the second half of the 1970s. Most prolific among them, Vladimir Tismăneanu recalled how his family milieu had exposed him to the critical Marxism of the second half of the 1960s, also crediting the local revisionist Marxism of the late 1960s, especially Nicolae Tertulian, for introducing him to what he termed "heretical Marxism"—Lukács, Adorno, and Marcuse in particular.[75] If he had chosen sociology over philosophy, it was because the former was also a profession, yet as it became clear after graduation there was little space to profess as a scholar of neo-Marxism in the second half of the 1970s. It was the temporary ambiguity which came with the reshuffling of existing institutional structures at moments of ideological mobilization that typically made way for both more dogmatic and more radical discourse. Such was the case of the student magazine *Amfiteatru*, which in the second

[75] Tismăneanu, *Lumea secretă*, 156.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

half of 1974 was restructured and included, until 1976, a section on "the dialectics of ideas" that hosted both analyses of party documents and articles by Tismăneanu, among others, on critical political philosophy.[76] While completing his PhD with a dissertation about the Frankfurt School, in the second half of the 1970s Tismăneanu published extensively on critical Marxism. He grew alienated by the strongly empirical orientation of the Laboratory for Sociological Studies and Research of the Design Institute for Typified Buildings in Bucharest, where he had been allocated after graduation, and from which he was unable to transfer into higher education or research, according to his own account, because of his family's political and ethnic background as illegalist communists of Jewish origin. He emigrated in 1981, contributed essays critical of Ceaușescu's regime to Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America in the 1980s, and built up a career as a political scientist in the United States.

The more typical trajectory, however, did not include the exit option. "1968 was a very sociological year throughout the world," one former student explained his choice for what he described as a fashionable, if poorly understood discipline. He recalled realizing early on that most of his colleagues had simply learned the textbooks of historical materialism and political economy by heart for the admission exams. "It was an ideological faculty, I don't know if we should forget that," he commented, "and sociology itself, whether it wants to or not, is in some way ideological, there's nothing you can do about it. But they acknowledged this, they weren't even hiding it." He did not consider Marxism in itself problematic, but the fact that it was "treated dogmatically, you could only say that the theory is perfect," the fact that it could not be

[76] For instance, Aura Matei-Săvescu, Doru Mielcescu, and Vladimir Tismăneanu published on the translation of György Lukács's *Asthetics* and *Ontology of social existence* in Romanian in the first half of the 1970s, including an interview with Nicolae Tertulian, who wrote ample introductory studies on Lukács's work over the late 1960s–1970s. See *Amfiteatru*, no. 4 (1975). Tismăneanu also published an article on Antonio Gramsci.

debated. After graduation and until 1990, he worked at the social medicine section of the Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, where he participated at research which he considered both serious and important, on issues such as alcoholism, suicide, family reproductive behaviors, AIDS, etc. He realized, however, that they were met with "complete disinterest," even when studies were specifically designed to inform government policy. "Research was inertia, everywhere, anyway," he explained, "we didn't have operative tasks. And the results we had, good, bad, they weren't even requested." As he described in detail what happened in situations when the initiative came "from above," it becomes clearer how the epistemological and political functions of sociology, seamlessly intertwined such as in the case of prognosis, were dissociated over long periods of time.

Around 1974, when the National Council for Science and Technology requested all research institutes to make a prediction of future research, in spite of having doubts about the way the prognosis was being constructed—according to institutions, and not thematically—he was involved in the survey organized by the institute in research centers and among professors in the field. Having submitted the study, however, he realized that only the projected data about funding had been used for a party congress report four years later, and that the council was requesting a new prognosis. It is then when he thought: "Ah, is this why we did this? Is this the interest of the National Council for Science and Technology? To give this guy [Ceaușescu] ammunition?" The second time when they did the prognosis, they invested a great deal of resources for collecting the data, which they anyway had to fit within a number of indicators that had been "weaved" by professors from the Academy of Economic Science, what he described as a "straitjacket, a Procrustean bed." The third time around, in 1983, in preparation for yet another party congress, they kept the text of the report previously

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submitted and only changed some data. “We didn’t know,” he explained, “neither the first nor the second time. Only the third time we figured out that in fact…: ‘Stop it, man, just write the speech, the part of the speech which fits… this is what you have to submit!’ This regarding the influence of the political.” That the crystallization of the idea of the “political” corresponded to a gradual process of alienation is reflected in his explanation of how he chose to become a book editor, after 1989, “to escape, to see something coming out of my hands, and to see that what comes from my hands is appreciated.” Looking back, he felt that there was not much else he could have done short of standing up to the whole world, that even if he had not been passionate about it, he had done his job, and that things might have been different for him if pursuing social or political philosophy would have been an option at the time.

The supposed divide between empirical and theoretical research in the late 1970s and 1980s, which has become a common trope in post-socialist accounts of sociology, stood alternatively for existential and professional options complexly intertwined with the intellectual and political destructuring of Marxist sociology. “I had more of an inclination towards measuring than the theory of measuring,” a former student from the sociology section at the University of Bucharest explained, contrasting the strands of political philosophy and mathematized sociology in terms of their market share at the time the interview was taken. In the early 1990s, he had been one of the sociologists involved in the spectacular expansion of surveying and polling into successful businesses, founding a company for marketing and research. Similarly, the Center for Urban and Regional Sociology (CURS) was established in 1990 from the Laboratory for Sociological Studies and Research of the Design Institute for Typified Buildings, where several graduates of the sociology department, including himself, had worked in the 1970s and 1980s. Yet the continuity of expertise should not obscure the complexity

of either the intellectual package from which the techniques of measuring were dissociated over time, or the individual stories that mediated its deconstruction.

Opting for measuring over "the philosophy of measuring" in the first half of the 1970s did not mean disengaging from theory. On the contrary, as his colleague and friend recalled their time together at the university, their interest in methodology had been part of a broader work of self-instruction. In the third year of studies, approaching graduation and feeling that the university courses had not prepared them enough for their future professions, they decided on a study plan that included three areas: Western neo-Marxist literature, political economy, and sampling. This fit the image of sociology at the time as a political, theoretical, and technical science, modern in its integration of the insight and methods of applied mathematics, statistics, cybernetics, and prognosis. What it did not correspond to was the actual experience of working as a sociologist, first "in production," employed in the personnel office of a factory in Bucharest, and later in research, as he transferred to the Center for Sociological Research in 1980.

The work he recalled in most detail was his theoretical contribution within the social structure research project coordinated by Honorina Cazacu. Drawing on the work of Milovan Djilas, Iván Szelényi and György Konrád, and Pavel Câmpeanu, he formulated the theoretical premises for a Marxist critique of the class structure of socialism, a project he described in terms of its limitations:

> Anyway, nobody noticed this, that if you quote Djilas it's as if you attacked the official thesis about classes and the homogenization of classes, etc. In this chapter I reached the conclusion that the criterion of property was no longer accurate, and what defined classes were their functions in society, especially the control over the means of production. But here I had to stop, I couldn't say that if we analyze Romanian society then it follows that those who control the means of production—the bureaucracy, the party apparatus, etc.—are a class and in fact are dominant; that this is the dominant class, with privileges, a prestigious social status, high revenues, and so on, with interests that coagulated more and more, and were even opposed to the interests of other social classes—[such as]

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

> the peasantry. I couldn't say this, but I said: this is the main criterion; and that's where censorship intervened. So this was the big achievement, this is how far we could take the conclusions of this research.

For his colleague who had the opportunity to work in empirical research immediately after graduation, experiencing the limitations of Marxist sociology for political practice, the crisis similarly played out at the level of theory. After a study conducted at the Laboratory for Sociological Studies and Research, he was invited to work with a group set up by the State Planning Committee for the restructuring of the research department. He recalled working for four months with passion but concluding that "nothing could be done." By the early 1980s, he realized that "measuring is not possible," started a PhD, and took over an editorial position at *Viaţa studenţească*. Recalling his intellectual preoccupations at that time, he captured the process of the destructuring of Marxist sociology as a hegemonic theoretical framework:

> I was trying to understand if the conceptual apparatus of Marxist theory was just a conceptual apparatus—some words—or if it was a step forward, a progress on the scale of understanding social phenomena, and this thing was torturing me. I was reading enormously on the history of Marxism, on phenomenology. I ended up understanding the difference between conceptual apparatus and the correct reflection of reality… I arrived at the philosophers, because, of course, this is a philosophical question. And that's how I met Constantin Noica, who said "No, it's a 'little speculative vehicle'"—I will never forget this definition. "You have your own conceptual apparatus which refers to class, revolution, profit, value, and you walk this 'speculative car' through different realities." […] "It's a speculative apparatus, a conceptual apparatus that belongs to you," he said, "I went with Hegel and semantics, so words give me concepts, you go with ideology—you are wrong in my opinion, but it's your choice."

Rather than simply the decoupling of theory and methodology, the 1980s saw the decentering of the neo-Marxism of the 1970s as an intellectual and political tool, opening up the way both for the "civil society" political alliances of the early 1990, and for the marketization of sociology.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

4. *Conclusions 1977–* *–1989 "A thing so inelegant it still haunts me today"*[77]

In 1977, the Faculties of Philosophy and History at the University of Bucharest were merged, marking the end of philosophy, sociology, psychology, and pedagogy as separate departments. The assistant professors from the sociology department, many of them graduates from the first cohorts of students, such as Maria Voinea, Ilie Bădescu, or Ioan Mihăilescu, could no longer fulfill their norms, and were required to teach sociology, historical materialism, or scientific socialism in other higher education institutions, as well. Other professors, such as Septimiu Chelcea, had transferred to the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Academy, where sociology, although marginal, was maintained as part of the postgraduate training curriculum for party cadres in leadership positions. As opportunities for empirical research were increasingly limited beginning in the late 1970s, sociologists in teaching and research positions also dedicated themselves, as noted by Ioan Mihăilescu, to compiling textbooks in their respective sociological specializations, which were then used in the early 1990s,[78] as well as to methodological works and to studies of epistemology.[79]

For the students from the Faculty of Philosophy which had not graduated at the time of the faculty reorganization, the restructuring of the curriculum for the remaining years of study most notably meant the addition of history courses. As recalled by a former sociology student who protested the changes, a memorandum addressed to the Central Committee was initially signed by almost all the students from the fourth year, as well

[77] Section based on unpublished oral history interviews with Horian Ensel, Dumitru Ghiţă (1973–77), Mircea Kivu (1974–78), Adriana Florea (1975–79), Nicolae Prepelea (1976–80), Rudolf Poledna (1977–81), Lavinia Betea (1978–82), Mihaela Hamis, Marius Lazăr (1979–83), and George Neamţu (1985–89).
[78] Mihăilescu, *Dialog neterminat*, 179.
[79] For a list of the works of theory, methodology, and epistemology from the late 1970s–early 1990s. see Zamfir and Filipescu, eds., *Sociologia românească*, 107–108.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

as by students from other cohorts. They boycotted the history courses for about a month until everyone gave up. Complaints were also raised through the Association of Communist Students, especially regarding the very high course load, to little effect as of 1978.[80]

The reorganization of the faculties also meant that the graduates' career prospects radically changed. Whereas students could specialize in sociology from the third year of study, much like at the Universities of Iaşi and Cluj, where sociology departments had never been established to begin with, the restructuring meant that job allocations were no longer separate depending on specialization. Sociology students who graduated in the late 1970s and early 1980s from the University of Bucharest recall that almost everyone received allocations as history or philosophy teachers, a prospect one student avoided by dropping full-time studies altogether and finding a job as a statistician. The perceived de-institutionalization of sociology is often associated with this sudden limiting of professional opportunities. "Because sociology was disbanded, we were forced to receive allocations in education and that's how I ended up…," a student who became a primary school history teacher recalled, "a thing so inelegant it still haunts me today, because we studied in one year what history students studied in four."

The prospects further deteriorated in the early 1980s, when the large cities were closed to any new residents, and most available positions were in small towns or the countryside. A student who graduated from Babeș-Bolyai University specializing in sociology and taught history in a small-town primary school, reflected on the situation in which graduates found themselves at the time: "They trained us at the highest level

[80] Dorin Roşca Stănescu, "Vine sesiunea şi la Istorie-filosofie. Dar când vor veni răspunsurile la propunerile studenţilor?" [The exam period is approaching at History-Philosophy, but when will answers to the students' proposals come?], *Viaţa studenţească*, 6 December 1978, 4.

a philosophy-history graduate could be trained. Practically—joking, with irony, I could say they made us into what was called multilaterally developed people. For what, though? Who benefited from this?" She hypothesized that the intention might had been to send highly trained graduates to the least developed parts of the country in the logic of a "cultural revolution" for which it was not only professional, but also civic duties that graduates were expected to perform. Although rarely mentioned, these obligations are sometimes described in not entirely negative terms. Such is one former student's account of how, because of her training, she could attempt to humanize otherwise routinized ideological activities, such as the discussion of party documents in the school where she worked.

Generally, however, the years spent in teaching positions were experienced, in the words of a sociology graduate from Cluj, as "a period of penitence." He taught history, political economy, scientific socialism, and philosophy for about forty hours per week, and outside his job contributed to literary magazines: "in my free time, I tried to remain myself, to remain an intellectual," he explained. Like others who studied in Cluj, he credited Ion Aluaş for teaching Max Weber, and so broadening the horizon of social theory, in particular on issues of modernization, beyond an exclusively Marxist theoretical framework. In the post-socialist period, Weberian sociology, as well as French sociology of culture, especially Foucault and Bourdieu, proved the most viable intellectual sources to position oneself both against Marxist social theory and against quantitative sociology. As one of the former students from the University of Bucharest explained: "I want Weber. I want [to research] things about which I can say something beautiful, and guide them in a certain direction, because social action is necessary. You don't do social planning like in the time of Miron Constantinescu, but it has to be done."

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

From the mutually limiting projects of Marxist sociology and social engineering as articulated by Miron Constantinescu and Henri H. Stahl, to the integration of sociology to a systemic approach to planning and scientific management, and finally the de-structuring of the quantitative and theoretical strands of sociology in the 1980s and early 1990s, a basic agreement that "social action is necessary" has served to construct a genealogy of sociological thought otherwise marked by the discontinuity of individual epistemic, professional, and political commitments. This is true for the sociologists trained in the interwar period, who gradually repositioned themselves in the second half of the 1950s; for the university professors of sociology retrained in the second half of the 1960s from philosophy backgrounds, who were generally edged out of public higher education in the post-socialist period, to continue their academic careers in private universities which they helped establish; as well as for the sociology students who graduated beginning in 1970 to significantly different prospects, from research and higher education, to state administration and offices for personnel, and finally to school teaching. Consequently, there is little in the way of the idea of a "sociological community" emerging from the accounts of sociologists trained during state socialism, but most importantly also little reflection on the changing dynamic between the epistemic assumptions, the political commitments, and the professional experiences of sociologists of various generations and social backgrounds.

What, then, had been the story of Liviu Turcu, the sociology student turned communist defector? And how does his career fare against the development of sociology as an intellectual and professional pursuit in the 1960s–80s? In his interview with Dorin Tudoran, Turcu was candid about what he described as his own naivety regarding the

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

nature of the socialist system.[81] Born in a family of workers from the province and too young to have experienced the Stalinist repression of the 1950s, he considered himself part of a generation that had been particularly susceptive to the communist regime's claims of de-Stalinization in the second half of the 1960s. He applied to the newly established sociology department at the Faculty of Philosophy, instead of engineering or medicine, with the thought of pursuing a diplomatic career in the Foreign Ministry and assurance from the faculty that he would be eligible to pursue postgraduate courses to that end after graduating from sociology. His evaluation of sociology as envisaged at the time is typical of the perspective of other graduates from the same period, who later articulated the vision of Marxist sociology integrated to the party-state in terms of the distinction between science and ideology.

The faculty, Turcu explained, was dominated by a spirit of intellectual liberalization, with sociologists trained in a "formative framework meant to respond to a very clear political command: that of being used as a 'scientific instrument' to justify the programs of socio-economic modelling elaborated by the party." After graduation, Turcu chose a position at the State Planning Committee, in a recently established research center which gathered young graduates in the social sciences and economics for the elaboration of Romania's long-term socio-economic development plan. Based on his experience of research projects having very limited practical results, he concluded that the institute represented leverage for the technocratic bureaucrats within the State Planning Committee, who sought to advance their position within the institution but at

[81] The transcript of the interview was published in the newspaper *Jurnalul Național* on 6 November 2006, and online at www.jurnalul.antena3.ro/special-jurnalul/vocea-americii-interviu-cu-liviu-turcu-1989-8522.html.

the same time were interested in maintaining their privileges from the party, and therefore heavily selected the information advanced to decision-makers.

After two years, Turcu transferred as an assistant at the University of Bucharest, where he had been pursuing a PhD under the supervision of Pavel Apostol since 1970. He researched the topic of interest and pressure groups in the capitalist political system from the perspective of systems theory,[82] and was thus directly engaged in the shift in sociological research to the issue of decision-making. At the university, Turcu also worked closely with the research group established by Mircea Maliţa and Mihai Botez in the framework of the World Future Studies Federation, on issues of prognosis and systems theory. In the mid-1970s, echoing the experience of sociology graduates at the same period, he also unsuccessfully attempted to profess as a journalist, and according to his own account grew increasingly frustrated, all the more so as he was not openly opposed to the system, nor did he believe dysfunctionalities were a matter of political will, but the result of bureaucratic stagnation and the selective circulation of information.

Turcu was recruited to the Foreign Intelligence Center at the end of 1975, a position he claimed he accepted out of professional interest—being able to pursue the diplomatic career he could not take up after graduation, as well as scientific curiosity—having access to Western sources of information and directly experiencing Western society. On the one hand, while his choice was exceptional, other conservative state structures, most notably the army, were also recruiting specialists at the time. On the other hand, having access to "the West" spoke to the aspirations of many, and probably did

[82] Turcu drew on a variety of sources in several languages, but mostly the American and British political science literature of the 1950s and early 1960s. See Liviu Turcu, "Grupe de interese şi grupe de presiune în sistemul capitalist contemporan (delimitări conceptuale)" [Interest groups and pressure groups in the contemporary capitalist system (conceptual delineations)], *Viitorul social* 5, no. 3 (1976): 532–38.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

represent a real leverage for recruitment. Short of emigration, which for those who could access it gradually became an option preferable to the professional prospects of sociology students in the late 1970s, the opportunities for travel and direct access to resources abroad was limited to sporadic contacts. Finally, there was the issue of the nature of the work. “Maybe you’ll be surprised,” Turcu told Tudoran, “but I have to say that in the first two, three years, I didn’t have many reasons to consider that my new occupation entered into conflict with my background training in social sciences, political science, and international relations.” Intelligence gathering was not a new profession, he reacted to Tudoran’s suggestion that from sociology he had stepped into a “new world,” but had always been closely intertwined with governance, especially with the advent of operations research during the second world war.

The criticism he levelled against Nicolae Ceaușescu and his close circle, as well as more generally against the socioeconomic development strategy pursued since the early 1970s, was that of the expert versed in the theories of global governance and international relations of the time, part of a young and highly educated state bureaucracy consolidated in the 1970s which grew increasingly dissatisfied throughout the 1980s. Whether the account of his career trajectory was genuine, was drawing on the perception of sociology and governance sciences at the time, or rather it was a combination of both is ultimately irrelevant. Turcu did illustrate a version of how the professional, epistemic, and political components of sociology could intertwine which was entirely within the realm of possibility.

Accounts of sociology under state socialism often focus on its limitations: from the lack of expertise in the 1960s, to the material and structural constraints of the 1970s, to the lack of professional opportunities in the 1980s. Yet the stories of sociologists trained under state socialism also speak of the variety of ways in which social science could be

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

integrated to professional practice, from literary criticism, labor studies, or ideological training, to gathering intelligence. Both conclusions are true for the condition of sociology under state socialism, best captured by the contrast between the variety of ways in which knowledge of the social could be pursued and the lack of alternatives at the individual level.

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PART II: GENEALOGIES

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Chapter 4. On participation:
Studies about socialist mass culture

From cultural infrastructure, to the ever-expanding *Cântarea României* "folk" festival, to versatile radio and television programming, beginning in the early 1960s the staggering breadth of socialist mass culture produced the most diverse assortment of specialists of the three case studies I analyze in the following chapters. Second only to political history in terms of scholarly engagement, the historiography of cultural politics in state socialist Romania mirrors its object in breadth and diversity. My own approach to the topic is from the margins of the intellectual field engaged in so-called "cultural production," and from outside the theoretical imagination of the field itself: rather than the policies, processes, or products of socialist mass culture, I discuss the perspective of a limited group of "experts," exploring how the dynamic between the research strands identified in the first part of the dissertation played out in the field of mass culture.

At the core of this chapter is the issue of participation, whether it was understood as a result of cultural activism, a necessary condition for the functioning of the system of culture, or as consent—the Gramscian other of domination. My argument unfolds in three steps: first, I follow the engagement of sociologists in the professionalization of cultural activism beginning in the second half of the 1960s, with an interest in the continuation of the interwar tradition of "sociologia militans" (militant sociology) and cultural work, specifically its assumptions about the agency of the subjects of culture; second, I discuss the development of the dominant systems' approach to mass culture in academic sociology, both in research centers and at the university, and its perspective on culture as a perfectible technology of governance; third, I question the breakdown

of the systemic approach to the social in the 1980s, detailing the case of the Marxist revisionist Pavel Câmpeanu and the career paths of several sociologists trained under state socialism who invested in the study of mass culture, propaganda, and public opinion.

1. *Cultural activism*

Îndrumătorul cultural (The cultural guide), a monthly journal published by the various iterations of the Ministry of Culture, and later by the State Council for Culture and Art, closely registered the shifts in the politics of mass culture over the first two decades of state socialism.[1] Established in 1948, the journal was instrumental in promoting collectivization starting in 1949, and remained largely focused on rural life until 1953, when workers and the achievements of industrialization temporarily move center stage. Artistic agitation brigades and amateur movements, scientific education, including atheism, and the training of cultural activists emerged as topics of interest in the journal, alongside the popularization of state economic plans, in the second half of the 1950s. As the cultural infrastructure was expanded to cover most cities and communes in the first decade after 1948,[2] beginning in the early 1960s, the journal increasingly raised issues related to the management of local cultural institutions, especially the improvement of the quality and diversity of their work beyond the level of lectures held by party activists. The 1960s also saw a gradual shift from the emphasis on the implementation of cultural policy and the dissemination of information to participatory

[1] For a retrospective published on the occasion of the journal's twenty-fifth anniversary, see "*Îndrumătorul cultural* la un sfert de veac: Retrospectivă" [*The cultural guide* after a quarter of a century: Retrospective], *Îndrumătorul cultural* 26, no. 5 (1973): i–v.

[2] Statistical data on the development of the cultural infrastructure over the 1948–68 period was published in the volume Direcţia Centrală de Statistică, *Învăţământul şi cultura în Republica Socialistă România: Date statistice* [Education and culture in the Socialist Republic Romania: Statistical data] (Bucharest: n.p., 1969). Even where numbers had not increased continually over the period, such as in the case of cultural houses, the comparison with 1938 was still impressive.

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cultural work, with local cultural activists encouraged to share their experience, learn from each other, and master tools for the diagnosis and improvement of their own work. This translated into a growing concern for the "professionalization" of cultural activism and the scientific grounding of cultural work, opening up the discussion on the theory and practice of mass culture that preoccupied the second half of the 1960s and the early 1970s.

The journal marked the beginning of attempts to establish a science of "adult education" in 1965, putting into dialogue artists, pedagogues, sociologists, cultural activists, directors of cultural institutions, and representatives of mass organizations researching or engaged in cultural work. A conference on adult education organized in 1968 brought these diverse groups together; yet there was little consensus on the topic of socialist culture, with pedagogues engaged in the articulation of its educational, *Bildung* dimension, cultural activists focusing on concrete practices of efficient cultural work, and sociologists investing in the theorization of "mass culture" and the development of empirical tools for the diagnosis and improvement of cultural management. In the late 1960s, the latter increasingly consolidated their expertise, as reflected in the change of discourse, practices, and institutional arrangements. Cultural activists were encouraged to integrate sociological methods into their work, with the first social survey organized locally dating from 1966. In 1970 the first laboratory for the research of mass culture was established in the industrial city of Brașov, followed by several so-called pilot stations—villages where experimental cultural policies were pursued.

Sociologists held recurring columns in the journal beginning in the second half of the 1960s. Traian Herseni introduced key topics from contemporary foreign literature on the sociology and psychology of mass culture, later collected in a study that concluded with a conservative view of the cultural and educational role of mass media, thought to

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

trade quality for accessibility, instruction for entertainment, and to prioritize the immediate needs of the viewers over the long-term goals of cultural edification.[3] The articles of sociologists trained in the interwar period appeared alongside methodological and theoretical pieces by researchers from the Institute of Philosophy, who represented the new generation of sociologists versed in "concrete sociological research" and structural-functionalism. Maria Larionescu, who was part of the research team coordinated by Mihail Cernea at the institute, detailed the methodology of designing surveys, sampling, and collecting and interpreting data, whereas Haralambie Culea, whose work I discuss in detail in the next section, sketched elements of a systemic approach to mass culture. Occasionally, professors from the sociology section at the University of Bucharest also published on the experience of summer field research campaigns. By the beginning of the 1970s, however, academic sociology and cultural activism were increasingly decoupled, as reflected even by the physical separation of expert discourse from the body of *Îndrumătorul cultural* into a trimestral supplement dedicated to "professional training and development."

A notable exception to this move towards the delineation of sociological expertise from cultural activism was Octavian Neamţu. Born in 1910, Neamţu studied sociology with Dimitrie Gusti at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy and participated at monographic research campaigns beginning in 1931. He joined the "Prince Carol" Royal Cultural Foundation in 1934, after Gusti was named director, and became one of the main organizers of the student teams mobilized for cultural work in the countryside in the following years. He also promoted the introduction of obligatory social service for students, a controversial compromise with the king's aim to curb the popularity of the

[3] Traian Herseni, "Coordonate ale culturii de masă" [Coordinates of mass culture], in Traian Herseni, ed., *Psihosociologia culturii de masă* [The social psychology of mass culture] (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1968), 7–77.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Iron Guard among youth. Neamţu served as the secretary of the social service until it was discontinued in 1939 and was then named director of the Royal Foundation in 1940, a position from which he supported publications by members of the Bucharest School of Sociology as well as research conducted after the war. Replaced in 1948, he worked as a primary school teacher and was employed in a glass factory in Bucharest before being implicated in the Pătrăşcanu trial and sentenced to one and a half years in prison. Upon release, he continued working as a planner in the glass factory, was involved in the short-lived attempt to conduct monographic research at the Institute for Economic Research together with Gheorghe Retegan, and was then hired at the academy as a documentarist.[4]

In the second half of the 1960s, Neamţu worked closely with Ovidiu Bădina, who had published a volume on Dimitrie Gusti in 1965, on further popularizing Gusti's life and work. Bădina completed his studies in philosophy at the University of Bucharest in 1958, studied the history of interwar sociology for his PhD in Philosophy, granted by the Lomonostov University in Moscow in 1962, and had been teaching social sciences at the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Academy in Bucharest after graduation. Bădina and Neamţu reworked a more dogmatic Marxist-Leninist approach to bourgeois sociology, seeking to rehabilitate Gusti by moving the emphasis away from his idealist theory of the social (described as a blend of Wundt's voluntarism with a counter-dose of Durkheimian positivism), and towards his realist insistence on the direct, unmediated approach to social reality through monographic research. Overall, this resulted in a romanticized portrait of Gusti as a scholar, teacher, social activist, and patriot, which overstated both

[4] The career of Octavian Neamţu was reconstructed by Zoltán Rostás, also based on oral interviews he conducted with Neamţu and his wife, Elena Neamţu, in "Octavian Neamţu, sau valoarea devotamentului" [Octavian Neamţu, or the value of devotion], in Marin Diaconu, Zoltán Rostás, and Vasile Şoimaru, eds., *Cornova 1931* (Chişinău: Quant, 2011).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

his sympathy for the Soviet Union and his international renown, ingredients that nevertheless rendered the book publishable for a foreign audience, especially since his fall from grace with the communist regime was not mentioned.[5] Rather than a mere propaganda exercise, this also paved the way, however, for the publication of a critical edition of Dimitrie Gusti's complete works by Bădina and Neamţu, which counted seven volumes over the 1968–93 period.[6]

When in 1967 *Îndrumătorul cultural* interviewed Stahl, Neamţu, and Bădina on the possibility of introducing the monographic method locally as a scientific tool for cultural work, the three dispensed with the usual ideological disclaimers surrounding interwar expertise. Stahl identified three types of studies that documented change locally and were used to mobilize public opinion for the implementation of party policy: the "village chronicles" compiled over the previous decades, to be replaced by monographs centered on a specific issue of local interest, and the monographs coordinated from the center at which local researchers would also participate. Bădina further argued that "any direct study of social reality has a double effect: knowledge of the realities of the village, of the possibilities and resources to be utilized, but also action over the subject of research and the researchers themselves."[7] This double role, constructive and educational, made monographic research into a tool for local development, as well as cultural and patriotic education—with the local population learning to think about their communities in future-oriented terms, and made aware of

[5] See Ovidiu Bădina and Octavian Neamţu, *Dimitrie Gusti. Viață și personalitate* [Dimitrie Gusti: His life and personality] (Bucharest: Editura tineretului, 1967). Shortened and translated in English as *Dimitrie Gusti* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1968).

[6] The sixth volume, which covered Gusti's career after 1948, was published in a severely censored version a year after Neamţu's death in 1976, as discussed by Octavian Bădina after 1989 in the introduction to the seventh and last volume of the series.

[7] "Colocviu despre monografia satului" [Colloquium about the village monograph], *Îndrumătorul cultural* 20, no. 5 (1967): 34–36.

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the processes of socioeconomic and cultural development more broadly at work and of their agency in them.

Over the next year, Neamţu published a series of articles with practical advice for the organization of monographic research, drawing on the interwar experience of students' cultural work in the villages.[8] In his account, it was the vision of the "monographists" as a group distinct from the "locals" that came to the fore. Commenting on how researchers should act in the field, for instance, he noted that they were to show respect towards the local administrative authorities, as their role was not to judge, but merely study local relations. Local intellectuals were not to be treated distantly or arrogantly but recognized as specialists from whom there was much to be learned. Finally, the researcher was to avoid "posing as the intellectual full of himself who 'descended among the people,' to 'make contact with the masses,'" but acknowledge that as a result of decades of modernization the people "spoke the same language as the specialists, not only figuratively, but also literally."[9] He encouraged mindful participation at the life of local communities, arguing that cultural work should rest on a close understanding of the concerns, needs, and possibilities of the people themselves.

Henri H. Stahl put forward a very similar vision of cultural work in the villages, which rested on the reconsideration of the role of cultural activists. Whereas in the past they had acted like an elite called upon to "culturalize" the un-cultured, Stahl argued, cultural activists sent to villages were to increasingly rely on "participatory research," which required involving the people studied in the very process of research, not as simple

[8] Cultural work, as systematized from the experience of the student teams between 1934 and 1939, covered three areas of research and intervention: health and labor, spiritual culture, and education. For a detailed account see Raluca Muşat, "The guidelines of cultural work—a vision of change," in "Sociologists and the Transformation of the Peasantry in Romania, 1925–1940," PhD diss., University College London, 2011, 225–45.

[9] Octavian Neamţu, "Monografia satului V" [The village monograph V], *Îndrumătorul cultural* 21, no. 4 (1968): 41.

informants but as collaborators at every stage. Drawing on the experience of interwar sociological research, Stahl suggested that collaborators should be chosen from among the "social leaders" of the village—what Frederic Le Play had called "social authorities"—but that marginal members of the community offered an interesting perspective as well. Taking inspiration from techniques developed by foreign sociologists, he concluded, cultural activists should also rely on and continue the experience of sociological research from the interwar period.[10]

The vision of participatory research in the villages did not come to fruition in the form of monographic research, which found isolated promotors locally but was never taken up as a widespread technology of social and cultural development under state socialism. The Youth Research Center (*Centrul de cercetări pentru problemele tineretului*), newly established in 1968 under the direction of Ovidiu Bădina, did host one monographic study coordinated by Neamţu and carried out by an interdisciplinary team, which unlike the volumes on industrialization edited by Herseni or Constantinescu and Stahl around the same time was closer to an exhaustive investigation or so-called "complex monograph."[11] Directly subordinated to the Union of Communist Youth, the center however quickly adopted as a main research method large-scale surveys conducted through the union's country-wide network, covering broad topics such as the professional integration of youth, the relationship between generations, or cultural consumption.[12]

[10] Henri H. Stahl, "Tehnici de cercetare şi acţiune culturală 'participativă'" [Techniques of research and "participatory" cultural action], in *Educaţia adulţilor*, 120–22.
[11] Octavian Bădina, Dumitru Dumitriu, and Octavian Neamţu, *Buciumi: Un sat din Ţara de sub Munte* [Buciumi: A village at the foot of the mountain] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S.R, 1970).
[12] The center was established by Ion Iliescu, who had just been appointed Minister of Youth in 1968. According to his own account, the center took inspiration from similar institutions in the West, as well as in Eastern Europe; Iliescu had also become familiar and was impressed, during his time as party secretary in Timişoara, with monographic research conducted in two villages from the Banat in the interwar period. Veronica Szabo, "Youth and Politics in Communist Romania (1980–1989)," PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2012, 93–94.

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Instead, Neamţu brought his vision of "social and cultural action" to an experimental project initiated by the Council for Socialist Culture and Education in the wake of the 1971 "Proposed measures for the improvement of political-ideological activity, of the Marxist-Leninist education of Party members, of all working people," a call by Nicolae Ceauşescu widely said to have inaugurated the so-called "mini-cultural revolution." The name captures the ambiguity of the broader shift in the administrative strategies pursued by the party from managerial to mobilizational and normative modes of control around the turn of the decade.[13] The stronger emphasis on participation at ideological production, the political edification of the masses, and the educational dimension of culture were at worst perceived as a return to the strictures characteristic of the period of socialist realism, but they also created opportunities for political engagement for otherwise marginal subcultures that speculated the call to produce ideology before the regime's preference for its own brand of national communism, blending national "folk culture" and modernization, became clear in the second half of the 1970s.

From its part, a younger generation of specialists which had made its way to positions of leadership in state institutions, such as the Council for Socialist Culture and Education, put forward a vision for change that skillfully coupled expertise and political engagement with the formula "research and action."[14] In 1972 and 1973, the council set up "pilot stations" in about a dozen villages throughout the country where, following

[13] Here I borrow the terms proposed by Mark Beissinger to describe six strategies pursued cyclically by Soviet leaders to overcome the bureaucratic rigidity of central planning: delegative, managerial, mobilizational, normative, centralist, and disciplinary. I prefer this classification to the simplified model of Stalinism (up to the early-1960s) – limited liberalization (up to the early 1970s) – neo-Stalinism (up to 1989), because it captures the agency of a variety of actors beyond the high-ranking party officials. See Mark Beissinger, *Scientific Management, Socialist Discipline, and Soviet Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

[14] It is not by chance that the vice-president of the council, Ioan Jinga, published several articles about the program in the sociological journal *Viitorul social*. See Ioan Jinga, "Cercetare şi acţiune în activitatea cultural-educativă de masă" [Research and action in mass cultural-educational activities], *Viitorul social* 1, no. 2 (1972): 594–402.

the model of pilot studies in industry, teams of thirty to forty researchers experimented new approaches to mass culture. In response to criticism leveled in party documents against the "formalism" of cultural and educational activities, carried out mechanically and through administrative means, the aim of the pilot stations was to develop methods adapted to the social and political realities of individual communities, involving the active participation of community members themselves.

Neamţu took part at the work of four pilot stations, one of which, Şanţ, he chose himself, as he had previously conducted a monographic campaign there in 1935. In his explanation of the vision behind the pilot stations, he emphasized that research was the basis for emancipatory social and cultural action:

> In our cultural-educational activity we aim to arm people with knowledge that allows them to transform the external environment in the direction they desire, but also knowledge that makes their own development possible; we aim to endow them with scientific information and techniques capable of changing things, but also with the capacity to get along with their fellows and understand them, as well as the working class conception about the world, with Marxist philosophy.[15]

In practice, the research teams organized training sessions with local cultural activists, such as librarians, school inspectors, or museographers, conducted studies which where never used to assist in the elaboration of the local "unitary cultural plans," and initiated discussion circles based on the declared needs of the community, such as an ethics course that one local referred to as a way for the community to solve its own problems and preempt the involvement of the police.[16]

Even before the project initiated by the Council of Socialist Culture and Education was discontinued, after less than two years, making way for a technocratic approach to

[15] Octavian Neamţu, *Cultura ca acţiune socială* [Culture as social action] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1976), 104–105.
[16] Ioan Jinga, "Experimentarea unui program cultural complex în unităţi pilot" [Experimenting a complex cultural program in pilot units], *Viitorul social* 2, no. 1 (1973): 188–97.

culture focused on issues of "scientific management," rationalization, and efficiency,[17] the interwar model of "sociologia militans" and cultural work was being challenged from within the sociological community. Asked to review Octavian Neamţu's manuscript for *Culture as social action*, submitted for publication in 1971, Haralambie Culea praised its accessible style but questioned Neamţu's uncritical reliance on the perspective of culture elaborated by the Bucharest Sociological School, and Dimitrie Gusti in particular. Moreover, Culea suggested that some of the topics covered in the manuscript would be better served by specialized disciplines (the sociology of science, political science, management theory, agrarian economy, cultural anthropology, etc.) than by the author's "global culturological perspective."[18]

Successful reworkings of the interwar "global culturological" perspective in step with contemporary (Western) social science were rare and not without their own contradictions, such as the case of social and cultural anthropology. Its promoter in Socialist Romania, Vasile Caramelea, belonged to the last cohort trained in sociology at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy before the war, and had received his PhD in 1947, under the supervision of Henri H. Stahl, with a historical sociological study of the village where he was born, Berivoieşti. While employed at the General Statistical Office in the 1950s, Caramelea began collaborating with the (physical) anthropology institute of the academy. In 1964, he established a separate cultural and social anthropology department, which he chaired, and in 1972 he also became the first lecturer in social and cultural anthropology at the University of Bucharest,[19] having been brought to the philosophy department by Tudor Bugnariu. Caramelea designated

[17] Ioan Jinga, "Conducerea ştiinţifică în domeniul activităţii cultural-educative de masa" [Scientific management in the field of mass cultural-educational activities], *Viitorul social* 4, no. 4 (1975): 642–53.
[18] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 5/1971, Haralambie Culea, "Referat," 10–28.
[19] "Vasile Caramelea," in Ştefan Costea, ed., *Sociologi români*, 88–92.

Berivoieşti a "permanent pilot station," where his small research team from the institute and students from the University of Bucharest conducted studies in historical, economical, linguistic, psychological, cultural, and educational anthropology.[20]

Following a collaboration with the American anthropologist E. Pendleton Banks, who studied the topic of values in the modernization of Romanian villages on a Fulbright scholarship in 1972–73, Caramelea called for the elaboration of a scientific approach to "national characterology" by Romanian social scientists themselves.[21] Conducting research in thirty-four rural and urban pilot stations over the next decade, he worked towards compiling an axiological atlas of the country, which was never completed.[22] The survival of social and cultural anthropology hinged on the dedication of its promotor and the orientation of the discipline towards a topic that became central to national identity politics in the second half of the 1970s and 1980s, even while cultural anthropology itself remained marginal. The sociology of mass culture and mass communications, which I discuss in the next section, had different aspirations. Emerging from the same move towards the professionalization of cultural and educational activities that appealed to sociologists trained in the interwar period, it was developed as a science of cultural management and modern propaganda.

[20] Vasile Caramelea, Gheorghiţă Geană, and Otilia Cirlănaru, "Cercetări de antropologie cultural-educaţională în staţia pilot Berivoieşti-Argeş" [Studies of cultural-educational anthropology in the pilot-station Berivoieşti-Argeş], in *Educaţia adulţilor*, 262–64.

[21] Pendleton Banks, a former student of Clyde Kluckhohn at Harvard, had conducted research on the "value orientations" of Yugoslav peasants prior to coming to Romania, and had become interested in a survey developed in 1969 by the Czech-born anthropologists Zdenek Salzmann to study the value orientations of Czechs and Slovaks. The Salzmann survey was applied in two pilot stations, Câmpulung and Berivoieşti, by a team of seven students coordinated by Tudor Bugnariu, and the result were later published by Caramelea, in collaboration with Pendleton Banks. See Vasile Caramelea, "'Orientări de valoare' în configuraţia culturii grupurilor umane. 'Staţie pilot' Câmpulung şi Berivoeşti" ["Value orientations" in the configuration of human groups: "Pilot stations" Câmpulung and Berivoieşti] *Caiete de studii, referate şi dezbateri*, no. 6 (1975).

[22] "Vasile Caramelea," in Ştefan Costea, ed., *Sociologi români*.

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2. *The system of mass culture*

In 1970, Mihail Cernea prefaced the first volume of a collection of sociological studies on mass culture and mass communications with a self-assurance characteristic of the spectacular development of sociology over the previous years:

> It is paradoxical that despite their breadth, despite the resources they mobilized, the activities of cultural dissemination [under socialism] were carried out largely under the sign of empiricism [*sub semnul empirismului*]. The diffusion of culture as a large-scale social process did not have at its disposal a science of its own—that is, a body of systematized principles for the optimization of the technical side of this activity, which would, at the same time, methodically reflect back on the activity itself. […] A policy of mass culture cannot do without a sociology of mass culture.[23]

Yet despite the commanding distinction Cernea articulated between the "spontaneous 'sociology'" of cultural activists and the sociology of mass culture, the superiority of "scientific expertise" was far from self-evident. In fact, as illustrated by Maria Larionescu's methodological chapter in the volume, in the second half of the 1960s the sociology of mass culture was riddled with epistemic anxieties.

Larionescu had joined Mihail Cernea's research group at the Institute of Philosophy after graduating from the Faculty of Philosophy in 1962. She contributed to the volume *Două sate* with a study of cultural participation, which revealed the failures of administrative, overly formalized cultural activities organized by local leaders (of the agricultural cooperative, cultural house, etc.) for whom the villagers had little respect. Larionescu documented the saturation of cultural programs with lectures (*conferințe*) that people avoided at all costs; the villagers' refusal to perform in artistic brigades because of lack of time, poor organization, and the general perception that they were

[23] Mihail Cernea, "Sociologia şi cercetarea procesului culturalizării" [Sociology and the study of the process of culturalization], in Mihail Cernea, ed., *Contribuţii la sociologia culturii de masă* [Contributions to the sociology of mass culture], vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1970), 7.

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only organized out of the obligation to fulfil the plan; and consequently the villagers' increasing reliance on mass-media for entertainment rather than instruction.[24] In 1968, Larionescu participated at a comparative study of the public of mass culture in two communities, one rural and one urban, the results of which were collected in the 1970 volume. She prefaced her discussion of the complex methodology used by the team with a reflection on the sociologist's position towards her object of research. Studies based on the assumption that the researcher's integration into the life of the community studied guarantees the veracity of knowledge, Larionescu argued, could easily fall into a "trap." Local prejudices and narrow-mindedness "hide from the eye of the researcher the true face of the object, even if she was located 'inside'; one might say—exactly because she was dominated by it."[25] Theoretically modelling social reality addressed this problem by allowing for "an experience before the experience."

It was the coordinator of the research group, Haralambie Culea, who formulated a systemic model of mass culture. Culea was born in 1929, in a Jewish family, as Hary Kuller. He was active in a Zionist organization in Iaşi as a high school student after the war, and was consequently rejected from the Faculty of Medicine, but went on to study philosophy in Iaşi and Cluj, graduating in 1952 with a thesis about Dimitrie Gusti. He was fired from the Academy's Institute of History and Philosophy in 1958 and from the Institute of Economic Research in 1962 as a non-party member, and after several years at the Institute for Energy Research, he returned to the Institute of Philosophy as a researcher in 1965, where he studied issues of mass culture, mass communications, and

[24] Maria Larionescu, "Înnoiri în viaţa culturală" [New developments in cultural life], in Mihail Cernea, ed., *Două sate*, 108–127.

[25] Maria Larionescu, "Cunoaşterea acţiunii comunicaţiilor de masă. Consideraţii metodologice pe marginea cercetării la Buda şi Buhuşi" [Studying the activities of mass communications: Methodological considerations about the research in Buda and Buhuşi], in Mihail Cernea, ed. *Contribuţii la sociologia culturii de masa*, 41.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

mass media.[26] Culea's systemic approach drew on American structural-functionalist literature on mass culture and mass media to define them as relatively autonomous objects of study, shown to consist of further subsystems, analyzed in their turn according to their structure and function. This often resulted in models based on experimentation with various possibilities for classification, which appear to have played no role beyond mapping the field of study, and were liberally swapped, expanded upon, or reformulated from one study to another.

Yet as Larionescu's account suggests, neither the hypothetical theoretical modelling of the system of mass culture nor the research methods devised to study it were simply tools to alleviate the fundamental epistemic anxiety towards the researcher's object of study, but themselves created and reproduced this anxiety at the core of the scientific pursuit. Several examples of the use of statistical methods from Larionescu's report illustrate this clearly. Having established a series of indicators for participation at mass culture, such as the type of shows and movies people watched, the type of books they read, or their mass media preferences, the research team formulated several versions for each, and proceeded to test them in pilot studies in the two communities. A cumulative scale designed to evaluate villagers' attitude towards television produced much fewer "aberrant results" than expected. To rule out fictive correlations among the indicators because of sampling errors, the team applied a chi-squared test with four, rather than the usual two degrees of probability, "for more precision."

A score of further methodological adaptations as devised to account for the complexity of the system, without assuming the independence of any of its parts. Human error was

[26] Hary Kuller, "Intelighenţia evreiască în anii comunismului local. Consideraţii preliminare şi studiu de caz" [The Jewish intelligentsia in the years of local communism: Preliminary considerations and case study], in Liviu Rotman, Camelia Crăciun, and Ana-Gabriela Vasiliu, eds., *Noi perspective în istoriografia evreilor din România* [New perspectives in the historiography of Jews in Romania] (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2010), 176–77.

also amply considered, with the research team making efforts to ensure that every member agreed on the interpretation of the questionnaire, that the students brought in as interview operators had previous field work experience, and that they applied the questionnaires correctly (they were tested after completing five interviews). Finally, the "sociocultural conditions" of the subjects were taken into account: notably, in the case of the peasant population the decision was made to conduct interviews based on the questionnaires originally designed to be self-administered because of the subjects' inability or reluctance to cooperate; whereas in the case of workers the possibility was considered that the responses might have been influenced by the circumstances in which the questionnaires were received, as they were distributed and collected by the factory administration. Overall, as detailed by Larionescu, sociological research amounted to more than a technology for managing culture—indeed, its role was to order the complexity of its object of study (through theory) and to address the equally complex epistemic anxieties it engendered (through methodology).

It was only in the second volume published by the research team from the Institute of Philosophy that the role of sociological research for the management of mass culture was integrated into the theoretical and methodological framework. Culea proposed a model of mass culture that comprised the systems of cultural institutions; ideas, values, symbols, and cultural models; and people's cultural interests, conduct, and lifestyle. Each of these systems was further structured into subsystems according to the function they played in relation to different social groups, as demonstrated by Culea in detail for the system of cultural institutions. There were various ways to do this, he conceded, yet systems were not merely the domain of "pure theory." On the contrary, Culea identified three ways in which the systemic approach to mass culture responded to the needs of cultural management:

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1. Cultural planning is possible only within a social reality that is structured or structurable—that is, able to take the form of a system.
2. Only starting from the objective rules of functioning of a given system can one establish the functionality of diverse organisms, institutions, collectivities with a role in the regulation or self-regulation of a cultural process.
3. The organic division of cultural life and cultural work, an objective requirement of general social progress, cannot be thought and realized efficiently and economically other than in the terms of "systems' theory."[27]

The systemic approach to mass culture also allowed for the formulation of criticism in terms of "dysfunctionalities," most notably the overlapping of attributions or bureaucratic duplication across state and party institutions, as well as at local, regional, and national levels.

Yet the central issue in empirical studies of mass culture and mass communications conducted throughout the 1970s was that of the relationship between people's cultural habits, preferences, and interests, the activities and institutions of mass culture, and the purported goals of mass culture under socialism. An empirical research coordinated by Culea in 1969–1970 in two medium-size cities pointed to people's marked preference for mass-media as a source of mass culture, to the detriment of other institutions (especially houses of culture) and that of more "traditional" forms of cultural activism and propaganda (especially conferences and symposia). This further correlated with a preference for entertainment over instruction in choosing the media content, but also with people's attitudes towards work. The majority of those asked to describe their work as either interesting, uninteresting, or boring chose one of the latter two options, or added the option of tiring/difficult. Moreover, the interest in entertainment was prevalent among the workers who either considered their work a burden (unqualified

[27] Haralamb Culea, "Procesul cultural de masă într-o zonă urbană" [The mass cultural process in an urban area], in Haralamb Culea, ed., *Structura procesului cultural de masă* [The structure of the process of mass culture] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1971), 32.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

workers) or merely a paying job (semi-qualified workers), the deficiencies of which could be "compensated" through culture.

"Deprived to a certain extent in their attempts to affirm their personalities," Culea commented on the latter, "some of the subjects studied showed the will to express, at least through culture, their individuality, wishes, aspirations, to feel important and useful."[28] These people "abandoned themselves to mass-media," expressing their own social aspirations by emulating the cultural practices of those with a higher social status (qualified workers, civil servants, intellectuals, etc.). In this sense, mass culture was shown to produce cultural hegemony not necessarily through its content, or because it naturalized an acceptable form of command (through cultural policy), but especially by way of allowing social grievances (potentially anti-hegemonic collective sentiments) to be compensated through individual acts of participation at mass culture.

One of the main conclusions drawn by Culea from the comparison between the population of the old industrial center and the industrial city built entirely under state socialism was that cultural interests grew increasingly homogenous, regardless of the existing cultural traditions, and that this was largely an unplanned, spontaneous byproduct of the processes of mass culture. Culea hypothesized that the development might have been explained by the homogenization of lifestyles under the impact of industrialization and urbanization; the standardization of cultural activities through their centralized planning; the standardization of the mass cultural products offered; and the similarity of the institutional networks distributing them. The homogenization of cultural interests and conducts was not in itself at odds with the collectivist ethos of the party-state, but as Culea commented, it did also imply to a large degree passivity

[28] Ibid., 55.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

(rather than artistic, social, or political activism). Consequently, he projected that one of the major aims of cultural policy would be to encourage the differentiation of cultural attitudes.[29]

According to Culea, negative peer reviews of the studies he conducted in the second half of the 1960s at the Institute of Philosophy, which deemed them "objectivistic," contributed to his temporary suspension from the institute in 1971.[30] The first half of the 1970s, however, saw a growing interest in the study of mass culture—including the sociology of theater, music, or literature—and due to the low degree of formalization, the broad appeal of the systemic / structural-functionalist approach in empirical studies. A volume on youth and mass media published by the Youth Research Center in 1971, for instance, collected studies by seventy authors, from researchers to cultural activists to journalists to high school professors.[31]

Meanwhile, the first study of mass culture coordinated by professors from the University of Bucharest, at which forty-eight students from the sociology and philosophy departments participated as questionnaire operators, was contracted by the Council for Socialist Education and Culture and took place in the summer of 1974, in Beiuş, a city close to the Apuseni Mountains. Natalia Damian, Septimiu Chelcea, Ion Constantinescu, and I. M. Popescu presented the results during one of the monthly

[29] Ibid., 26–8.

[30] Kuller, "Intelighenţia evreiască," 179. The scientific reports [*referate*] were a form of internal peer-review of the annual studies submitted to the relevant section of the Academy of Social and Political Studies for approval as part of the plan [*lucrare de plan*]. Based on a report by the author or the coordinator of the research team and two peer reviews, the studies were discussed in a meeting of the section at which generally ten researchers participated. In the archive of the sociology section I have not encountered any study that was rejected based on the peer reviews. The degree of engagement varied from reviewer to reviewer: while some reviews were a simple formality (summarizing the content of the study, for example), many engaged in a substantial and often critical way with the theory, methodology, arguments, or demonstration of the studies. It is possible that practices varied from section to section. Unfortunately, the archive of the philosophy section does not preserve any studies from the 1965–70 period, and the only study authored by Culea, dating from 1975, is missing the peer reviews.

[31] Ovidiu Bădina and Constantin Schifirneţ, eds., *Tineretul şi mass-media* [Youth and mass-media] (Bucharest: Centrul pentru Problemele Tineretului, 1971).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

public meetings organized by the Laboratory of sociology in 1975. They articulated the main questions of the study in terms of social equality: to what extent, they asked, were the specific cultural needs of different socio-professional categories satisfied by the institutions of mass culture, and to what extent did the institutions ensure equal opportunities for intellectual and cultural development for all these categories, achieving homogenization without it leading to uniformization? To this end, the research hypotheses focused on the groups most likely to be excluded from participation at mass culture: commuters, thought to have less free time than other categories of workers; working women, because of the lack of social services and the resilience of traditional “relationship models”; night shift workers; people living in large households, people with children, older people, etc.

Although not all the hypotheses were confirmed for the specific context of Beiuş, where commuting proved to be minimal and there was no work over night shifts, the study offered a depressing picture of low cultural participation at activities organized by the institutions of mass culture such as the “house of culture” (*casa de cultură*) because of lack of time, interest, or information, and low satisfaction among those participating. The researchers concluded that the institutions of mass culture addressed people as the object of education rather than the subject of mass cultural activities, and that a shift in the understanding of the public from passive receival to active participation was needed. The dysfunctionalities of the institutions of mass culture were further exacerbated by people’s clear preference for mass media, especially television, which came with its

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own dysfunctionalities—as a source for culture, it was eclectic and unstructured; it isolated people from each other; and it valued information over action.[32]

The debate following the presentation of the research team offered an overview of the main approaches to mass culture in the 1970s: Henri H. Stahl's vision of "social engineering" came through in his suggestion that any activities of mass culture should be preceded by a "cultural diagnosis"; Vasile Caramelea's anthropological take emphasized the importance of processes of enculturation and socialization; the representative from the Council for Socialist Education and Culture requested that the authors focus more on practical recommendations, and that they properly support their conclusions with data; and Haralamb Culea made a plea to overcome the empirical study of disconnected elements in the research of mass culture and mass communications, and formulate a theory of the broader social processes at play. "As 'systemists,'" Culea argued, "we must think that everything is connected to everything, or at least that the essential things in the lives of individuals are connected to essential things from the life of society."[33]

As documented by an unpublished study that he submitted to the Institute of Philosophy in 1975, Culea envisaged such a theory of mass culture in terms of a system of "contradictions." At the macro-social level, he noted the contradictions between socio-economic development and cultural development; between the ideological and institutional development of mass culture and the "lived" culture experienced by the masses, including their socialist consciousness; between the goal to generalize and homogenize mass culture and the social and cultural differences persisting across social

[32] Natalia Damian, Septimiu Chelcea, Ion Constantinescu, I. M. Popescu, "Cerinţe sociale ale culturii de masă" [The social requirements of mass culture], *Caiete de studii, referate şi dezbateri*, no. 5 (1975): 3–36.
[33] "Dezbateri" [Debates], *Caiete de studii, referate şi dezbateri*, no. 5 (1975): 37–48.

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groups (in terms of the level of education, profession, but also ethnicity); or between the goals set for mass culture activities and the actual capacities for management. To this Culea added an equally long list of "intra- and inter-systemic" contradictions specific to mass culture, most notably that between differentiation and homogenization as a result of both objective factors and what he euphemistically called "the intervention of the 'subjective factor'" (political decision making), and the numerous contradictions observed in the functioning of the institution of mass culture.[34] Fired from the Institute of Philosophy in 1975, he became a researcher at the Institute for Ethnology and Dialectology, from which he was forced to retire in 1989.

His study of the contradictions of mass culture, which was never published, illustrates the opportunities and limitations of the debates on homogenization and differentiation carried in the field of social sciences more broadly at the time. While it allowed the mapping of numerous points of contention, the constant act of balancing between criticism and legitimization meant that compared to the explicit focus on social inequality of the research team from the University of Bucharest, for instance, Culea's account was much more ambiguous. Discussing the issue of minority culture from the perspective of the contradiction between homogenization and differentiation resulted in a convoluted description of a desirable process of "mutual implication" between Romanian and minority cultures—with problems on both sides positively solved through the intervention of the "subjective factor."[35] The same theoretical framework served to reinforce racial bias towards the Roma population. Culea listed the Roma among the extreme examples in a footnote to his discussion of the contradiction

[34] ANR, ASSP—Filosofie şi Logică, file 12/1975, Haralamb Culea, "Omogenizare şi diferenţiere în procesul culturalizării de mase" [Homogenization and differentiation in the process of mass culture], 45–47.
[35] Ibid., 58–60.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

between the goal of creating a "homogeneous" socialist mass culture and the difficulties posed by social categories "differentiated" by their low level of culture, other examples being members of isolated rural communities from the mountains, rural working women outside of state employment, members of religious sects, or unskilled youth.[36] The same ambiguity extended to his discussion of the use of propaganda methods: it was not socioeconomic inequalities themselves that were problematized, but the fact that not accounting for them rendered propaganda less efficient.

In the second half of the 1970s, studies in this vein were also conducted by Ion Drăgan at the Center for Sociological Research. He coordinated research on the efficiency of propaganda and mass communication in configuring public opinion, arriving at three main conclusions based on which propaganda could be improved: 1) the efficiency of information and educational activities depended on their differentiation according to the social, professional, and cultural characteristics of the public; 2) both the quantity and the quality of propaganda were important for its success among all categories of the public; 3) efficient propaganda was associated with the active participation of the masses at the realization of the ideals, principles, and values of the socialist society.[37] This set of principles illustrates well the basic epistemic assumption of the systemic approach: as part of the very system it was describing, sociology worked towards its improvement without ever questioning its own role in naturalizing—by deeming them mere "dysfunctionalities"— the inequalities the system created and reproduced.

[36] Ibid., 56.

[37] Ion Drăgan, *Opinia publică, comunicarea de masă şi propaganda în societatea contemporană* [Public opinion, mass communication and propaganda in contemporary society] (Bucharest: Editura ştiinţifică şi enciclopedică, 1980), 387–88.

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3. *Beyond the systemic approach?*

In 1979, at a conference of the Comparative Cultural-Theoretical Working Group of the socialist countries organized in Boja, Bulgaria, the sociologist Pavel Câmpeanu presented twenty-five theses on the theory of television, in which he criticized the unreflective appropriation in socialist countries of the American competitive model of television programming and corresponding theoretical framework, and called for the development of a Marxist approach to mass media, and television in particular. As the founder and director of the Center for Studies and Polls of the Romanian Radio and Television, Câmpeanu had been coordinating a small team for over a decade which conducted systematic surveys of the television audience, rapidly expanding from the second half of the 1960s.[38] The center had effectively become the only institution which carried out regular nationally representative public opinion surveys in Socialist Romania, based on which Câmpeanu developed a comprehensive cybernetic theory of mass communications. Over the course of the 1970s, however, he became entirely disillusioned with the project.

As he left the center in 1980, his manuscript *The Syncretic Society*, a critique of Stalinism prompted by the crushing of the Prague Spring had just been published under pseudonym in the United States, introduced by the political scientist Alfred G. Meyer as "the sharpest, gloomiest, and most desperate critique of Soviet and East European systems yet produced by any Marxist."[39] Stalinism, Câmpeanu argued, was the result of "premature socialism," a syncretic society brought about violently by the Leninist

[38] On the history of the Romanian television under state socialism, see Alexandru Matei, *O tribună captivantă. Televiziune, ideologie, societate în România socialistă (1965–1983)* [A captivating tribune: Television, ideology, society in Socialist Romania (1965–1983)] (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2013).
[39] Felipe García Casals, "The Syncretic Society," *International Journal of Politics* 10, no. 4 (1980/1981), ix.

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revolution as a combination of precapitalist (economic underdevelopment) and postcapitalist (class structure predicated on abolishing private property) elements, governed by an autonomously organized power structure.

The result was not “a *system* […] but […] a nonsystemic conglomerate, each real system of which constitutes one of those elements. What binds this artificial construction together could hardly be other than coercive force.”[40] Moreover, syncretism was based not on the Marxist concept of contradiction, but on incompatibility, which meant that it was static, rather than dynamic, and tended to reproduce itself indefinitely rather than grow into conflict and transform. “Contradiction,” it concluded, “stimulates the self-regulating energy of any system, whereas incompatibility opposes a systemic existence, presupposing a regulating energy from the outside.”[41] With its focus on the crucial role of extra-economic coercion in the endurance of Stalinism, *The Syncretic Society* marked a radical break with the focus on participation and establishing a cultural basis for consent which had underpinned mass culture research, including Câmpeanu’s, since the mid-1960s. But how had the epistemic and political assumptions of the systemic approach come undone? Câmpeanu’s intellectual biography is a good indication.

Born in 1920, Câmpeanu became active in the youth section of the illegal Romanian Communist Party when he was fifteen. He spent three years in the Caransebeş prison beginning in 1941, famously sharing a cell with Nicolae Ceauşescu for a brief time, and went on to work in the external relations section of the Central Committee after the war, dealing with the leadership of the Greek Communist Party in exile in Bucharest and the

[40] Ibid., 48 (emphasis in original).
[41] Ibid., 7.

Yugoslav Stalinists who emigrated to Romania following the Tito-Stalin split.[42] Interviewed by Zoltán Rostás in 1986, Câmpeanu was candid about his Marxist background:

> My path towards sociology could be called irrational, because it started with my aspiration to change society before understanding it. I think many young people my age became Marxists before reading the *Capital*, so I am no exception from this point of view. Maybe I represent an aberration from that of my subsequent extravagance… after the war passed and society was changed or began to change, my interest in theoretical clarification developed as well.[43]

From 1956, Câmpeanu studied for a PhD at the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Academy, graduating in 1960 with a dissertation on the social conditioning of art in socialism. He recalled 1958 and the following years as extremely harsh politically, with half of his colleagues unable or not allowed to graduate. This was also reflected in his dissertation, published in 1964, which did not deviate from the main premises of Marxist-Leninist esthetics: the theory of reflection, the issue of the economic conditioning of art, the role of the party in guiding artistic production, and the role of socialist-realist art in educating the masses.[44] Even in this context, it was the emphasis on the social in the dissertation that Câmpeanu perceived, similarly to other Marxist intellectuals in the first half of the 1960s, as a way to "escape from the burden of the extremely generalizing historical materialist approach."

As he started working in the theater section of Romanian Radio and Television after graduation, which later inspired the first of a sociological trilogy on mass culture,[45] Câmpeanu proposed the establishment of a research center "to know what happens with the messages it launches every day." The center was approved and received a small

[42] Câmpeanu, *Ceauşescu*, 11.
[43] The transcript of the interview conducted on 2 October 1986 was generously shared with me by Zoltán Rostás.
[44] Pavel Câmpeanu, *Condiţionarea socială a artei în socialism* [The social conditioning of art in socialism] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1964).
[45] Pavel Câmpeanu, *Oamenii şi teatrul: Privire sociologică asupra publicului* [People and the theater: A sociological survey of the public] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1973).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

budget in 1967, which Câmpeanu nevertheless explained made it "a rich institution" able to pay its collaborators, in comparison with the situation of sociology in Romania at the time. The center took inspiration from the research institute of the Polish Radio and Television in Warsaw, which Câmpeanu visited at the end of the 1960s. He was particularly impressed to find that it functioned as a "quasi-institute for the research of public opinion," which is what he set out to do on the long term at the Center for Studies and Polls as well.

"The problem of opinion surveys is the problem of representativity," he explained with regard to the research of mass culture conducted at the Institute of Philosophy around the same time as the center was established, "and if they are not done on a national sample the representativity of which is well established they have no value." The national samples for the radio and television surveys were established in 1968 in consultation with the Methodological Council of the Central Statistical Office, and the first two studies were planned for June 1968, approved for 1969, and conducted in 1970.[46] Yet in the absence of a network of local specialists able to cover the entire territory of the country, the number of people interviewed to ensure the representativity of the sample was as high as 7,400 for the 1970 annual survey. As a solution, the center set up via post a national network of several hundred voluntary survey operators

[46] Archive of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Company [Arhiva Societății Române de Radiodifuziune, hereafter SRR], file 1968—Şedinţe de comitet, "Şedinţa colegiului din 21 mai 1968" [College meeting, 21 May 1968]. In the summer of 2015, when I conducted research in the SRR archive, the files from 1968–1971 had not yet received inventory numbers. I would like to thank the head of the Department for Cultural Patrimony and Archives, Raphael Vieru, for being very accommodating despite the lack of resources and personnel. I am very grateful to the SRR archivists, especially Paula, who offered me guidance, kept me company, and shared her very limited space and time with me during my stay. Alexandru Matei, who had previously conducted research in the SRR archive for his pioneering book on the history of Romanian television during state socialism, and Andra Mitia, herself a researcher and urban sociologist who worked at the SRR at the time, kindly talked to me about their research, answered my questions, and showed interest in my work.

throughout the country, who helped fill out questionnaires for the monthly and yearly surveys, as well as the increasingly more complex studies of the public's preferences.[47]

Reflecting on the role of the network in 1986, Câmpeanu evaluated it by comparison to the possible alternatives:

> We are talking of non-institutionalized investigators. In many studies on the efficiency of party propaganda, party institutions or party organizations were used, which creates a hierarchical relation between the interviewer and the interviewee, unconvincing from the point of view of conducting an investigation. Apart from the fact that they were not paid, the voluntary survey operators the center used had the advantage of an enormous territorial dispersion. And it had the extra advantage that it was a dialogue between people who knew each other.

In this formulation of the main epistemic constraints to the study of public opinion as 1) the existing hierarchy of power, 2) the lack of resources, and 3) the distance between subject and researcher, the participation of the masses at their own ideological edification no longer represented either a goal in itself, or the end result of a functioning system of mass culture, but a feed-back loop for the self-regulation of the system.

Câmpeanu put forward a theory of mass communications as a cybernetic system already in 1972. Similarly to other attempts to apply cybernetics to the management of culture in the Soviet Union[48] and elsewhere in the Eastern bloc, his theory envisaged the role of mass communications as contributing to "the consolidation of the dominant ideology, exercising over the members of society a deliberately oriented informative-formative influence."[49] Having established that this could not be achieved through coercion, but was an issue of how to systematically create consent, Câmpeanu grappled with a range of topics similar to those raised by the systemic approach to mass culture,

[47] Pavel Câmpeanu, "Spre o rețea națională de anchetatori" [Towards a national network of investigators], Viitorul social 1, no. 2 (1972): 682–85.
[48] Documented in detail in Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, "Constructing Soviet Cultural Policy: Cybernetics and Governance in Lithuania after World War II," PhD diss., Linköping University, 2008.
[49] Pavel Câmpeanu, *Radio, televiziune, public* (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1972), 56.

with the important difference that the cybernetic language allowed him to better integrate the issue of command into the analysis. He discussed the role of feedback loops between society as the object and subject of mass communications and the control structure, arguing that ideally the interests of the two should converge; the role of theory (expert knowledge) within the cybernetic system, which rendered it "self-conscious"; the tension between receiving information and changing behavior, as the main creative contradiction of propaganda; and the functional, non-functional, and dysfunctional effects of mass communications.

By the end of the 1970s, as he published the second book in the trilogy of mass culture on the topic of television, Câmpeanu had become profoundly skeptical of the ability of the system of mass communications to integrate feedback from either the experts or the public. As far as the role of the experts went, he discussed at length in the 1986 interview taken by Rostás how the Center for Studies and Polls had gradually found itself in a position of "double marginalization": within the institution of the Radio and Television, and within the sociological community. "It was enormous work," he explained, "not just to conduct these investigations. It was enormous work not just to write survey reports in which to avoid the faintest trace of self-censorship. But it was also enormous work to familiarize people with the survey reports, which delivered unpleasant information through and through." The situation was further aggravated by the restructuring and downsizing of the institution beginning in 1973, on which occasion the center lost its financial autonomy and "slowly fell under the suffocating governance of the administration." After his leaving in 1980, Câmpeanu continued, the center had been reduced to three people conducting the most basic investigations,[50]

[50] Based on my research in the SRR archive, this meant the monthly and yearly audience barometers for radio and television (a ranking of shows based on the number of listeners and viewers).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

which he speculated were heavily censored at several levels of the administration before reaching the management.

Regarding the position of the center within the sociological community, Câmpeanu described its almost complete isolation, for which he offered various explanations: the lack of interest within the sociological community for the trivial "problems of mass media"; epistemically, "a resistance, a suspicion against numbers, an intellectual revulsion for converting qualitative phenomena in quantities, for simplification"; and institutionally, its dependence on the Romanian Radio and Television as "the only departmental research center on the so-called ideological front." The latter ensured more possibilities for cooperation, but also meant that collaborators were more interested in maintaining their good relations with the institution than the center. Câmpeanu concluded that there had been more interest in the center's research from similar institutions abroad than from fellow sociologists in Romania.

As for the role of the public as the object and subject of mass communications, studies conducted at the Center for Studies and Polls in the second half of the 1970s that Câmpeanu discussed in his volume on television revealed not just the inefficiency of propaganda, but also the stifling effect of mass media on social action. A comparative survey about the best movies aired on television in 1975, for instance, showed that there was no agreement between the evaluation of the audience and that of a group of experts. Similarly, a 1977 survey on the importance of recent events showed that the public consistently underestimated external politics and overestimated the importance of local non-political events, as compared to the specialists.[51] Both culturalization and

[51] Pavel Câmpeanu, *Oamenii şi televiziunea. Privire sociologică asupra telespectatorului* [People and television: A sociological perspective on the television audience] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1979), 84–85.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

information, these results suggested, failed in their capacity of propaganda, in as much as they did not lead to the interiorization by the public of the system of values they modelled: "The system of mass communications managed to a greater degree to cultivate the need for current information, than to also transmit along with it the system of values according to which it selects, presents, and interprets the information."[52] Several further studies conducted in 1978 that assessed which were the most watched and appreciated shows on television revealed people's overwhelming preference for foreign TV series such as *Poor Man, Rich Man*, or *The Onedin Line*. To explain what he called the public's "non-esthetic appreciation" of these cultural products, Câmpeanu drew a parallel between false consciousness, which naturalized the producer's self-alienation, and the satisfaction produced by spectacle, which "reconciles the producer with the mystified representation of his/her real condition, and therefore the condition itself."[53]

Summarizing his theoretical approach to television in the twenty-five thesis presented at the Cultural Forum in Bulgaria, Câmpeanu argued for the need to formulate an ontology of television understood as a modality of social existence, which he maintained had not emerged as the technological solution to a social problem, but rather represented the corresponding social problem to a technological invention. The television was the medium of what he called "immoderate spectacularity," defined as a parallel to the commodity economy. Whereas the role of the economy was to distribute and diminish poverty, to which purpose it was organized as a system of compulsions and limitations, the television's immoderation saw that people's requirements were for the first time surpassed rather than limited. The one was the realm of necessity, the

[52] Ibid., 170.
[53] Ibid., 197.

other of apparent freedom. Both commodity economy and spectacularity were forms of exchange: of objects of requirement into objects of exchange, and objects into pictures, respectively, with the same basic mechanisms behind both commodity fetishism and the false consciousness of the viewer unable to distinguish between reality and fiction. Yet television did not just operate at the level of social consciousness, but at the level of social action as well: “immoderate spectacle drives the transforming social energy from the genuine action towards genuine observation of imagined actions,” thus easing social conflicts, Câmpeanu concluded. Through the confusion of consciousness and existence, picture fetishism encouraged and maintained commodity fetishism.[54]

The twenty-five theses were published in a special edition of *Jel-Kép*, the journal of the Hungarian Mass Communication Research Center, in preparation for the 1985 meeting of the Cultural Forum held in Budapest, with commentary by several Hungarian specialists. Was there an alternative to the “American model of television”? Iván Vitányi asked, “Do we have to change the content of the programs, or do we have to limit the ‘immoderateness’ of television, and if yes, how?”[55] Câmpeanu’s own solution, suggested in 1979, was educating the spectator to transition from excessive to moderate “participation” at mass culture. Yet the fact that only several years later television programs in Socialist Romania were drastically cut to around two hours per day during the week, thus solving the issue of “immoderateness,” was but a historical irony.

In fact, the issue at the core of Câmpeanu’s theory of television was alienation in industrial society more broadly, and socialism in particular, as detailed in the last volume of the trilogy of mass culture, coauthored with his long-term collaborator at the

[54] Pavel Câmpeanu, “25 Theses to a Marxist Television Theory,” *Jel-Kép*, Special edition for the Cultural Forum 1985, Budapest (1985): 38–43.
[55] Iván Vitányi, “Is Another Model Possible?,” *Jel-Kép*, Special edition for the Cultural Forum 1985, Budapest (1985): 52–53.

Center for Studies and Polls, Ştefana Steriade. Writing on film, Câmpeanu and Steriade described the condition of the spectator as “member of a society which contests her as an individual in order to integrate her as a producer,” with film expressing the need to overcome this condition while working to reproduce it.[56] Their demonstration, a psychological, sociological, and semiotic analysis of people’s preference for melodramas, proposed little in the way of a projected solution. As Câmpeanu started publishing his trilogy on the origins, genesis, and end of Stalinism in 1986 in the United States, the message that it was the political, economic, and social organization of the existing form of anticapitalist development in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union which needed overcoming was clear.[57]

Câmpeanu’s institutional isolation as well as the circumstances in which his books were published meant that his influence among the generations of sociologists trained under state socialism was limited. The mix of empirical sociology and Marxist critique did speak to graduates attempting a similar synthesis, such as Călin Anastasiu and Alin Teodorescu, who later also became part of the Social Dialogue Group (Grupul de Dialog Social), a civil society platform established after 1989, with Câmpeanu as one of the founding members. Other than Marxist political economy, semiotics and French sociology of culture inspired research beyond the systemic paradigm, with the caveat

[56] Ştefania Steriade and Pavel Câmpeanu, *Oamenii şi filmul. O privire sociologică asupra spectatorului de film* [People and film: A sociological survey of moviegoers] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1985), 53.

[57] The trilogy, *The Origins of Stalinism* (1986), *The Genesis of the Stalinist Social Order* (1988), and *Exit: Towards Post-Stalinism* (1990), which unpacks the arguments of “The Syncretic Society,” is extensively discussed in Alex Cistelican, “Pavel Câmpeanu,” *Plante exotice*, 291–357. For a discussion of the “method of mirrored opposition” in Câmpeanu’s critique of capitalism and Stalinism as constructed idea types, which raises the question whether his approach better fits the canon of Cold War political theory than the tradition of critical Marxist debate on development, see Ágnes Gagyi, review of *Plante exotice* and *Sociologica istorică a lui Henri H. Stahl*, *Studia UBB Sociologia* 61, no. 1 (2016): 155–57.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

that they also created the opportunity for emigration as conditions were increasingly deteriorating in the 1980s.

Gina Stoiciu, who graduated in the second half of the 1970s from the philosophy section at the University of Bucharest, proposed a semiotic approach to the study of film, as a move beyond the informational, communicational, and systemic theoretical paradigms to mass communications which had dominated research in the 1960s and 1970s.[58] Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu, who graduated from the psychology department of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Iaşi in the mid-1970s, worked as a researcher at the Center for Social Sciences in Iaşi in the early 1980s. He drew on French cultural sociology (especially the sociology of literature) to integrate the issue of the social behavior of cultural producers into a theoretical approach to the optimization of mass culture, and in the second half of the 1980s became increasingly interested in the sociology of intellectuals, and Pierre Bourdieu in particular.[59] Generally, however, the intellectual resources for grappling critically with the epistemic and political assumptions of the systemic, structural-functionalist paradigm were scarce for the generation of sociologists trained under state socialism. How thoroughly these assumptions had been institutionalized by the end of the 1970s is reflected in oral history accounts of former students who describe research in the 1980s as increasingly alienating, or the moment when the paradigm shifted as a fundamental breakthrough.

[58] Gina Stoiciu, *Orientări operaţionale în cercetarea comunicării de masă* [Operational orientations in the research of mass communications] (Bucharest: Editura ştiinţifică şi enciclopedică, 1981). Shortly after the book was published, she emigrated to Canada, where she specialized in the sociology and anthropology of communications and became a professor at the University of Quebec.

[59] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 19/1982, Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu, "Optimizarea activităţii culturale de masă" [The optimization of mass culture activities]. He emigrated to France shortly before the 1989 revolution, and built up a double academic career in Paris and Iaşi. In 1997, he completed a PhD under the direction of Pierre Bourdieu, on the topic of party schools under state socialism.

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In June 2018, I interviewed Andrei Negru, who graduated from the sociology department at the University of Bucharest in 1971 and worked as a researcher at the Center for Social Sciences in Cluj until his retirement in 2017. Early into the interview, Negru recalled his experience of field research as a student. He had been part of the teams coordinated by Virgil Constantinescu in Slatina and Pitești. Tasked with filling out questionnaires, he remembered that it was difficult to find the people at home during harvest, that the questionnaire was too long, and that it also contained questions that "did not correspond to reality," such as questions about democratic participation at the leadership of agricultural cooperatives. In response to my question whether he had already reflected back then on the discrepancy between social realities and the way in which they were constructed in sociological research, he replied:

> Sociology, in my opinion, might as well not have been re-established. Leave it as it was, because I don't know who needs sociology. In theory it is needed, in practice it's not. I worked for forty-six years at the institute, financed by the state, […] but nobody ever came to say—study this or that. So, it means that there's no need for these studies. We were always forced to invent research topics. And this is very difficult. Because at some point you lose the motivation and the energy to keep finding something that sounds good, and then.... Until 1989, every year we had to submit a study for the plan [*lucrare de plan*] and we sent it to Bucharest, with two reports. Our studies… they put them in the basement and that's where they left them. It's nice, everyone says: sociologist—important. That is not true.

Negrea looked back on his career with the feeling that it had been wasted. At the Center for Social Sciences in Cluj, the sociology research group which he joined in 1971 consisted of three researchers: two philosophy graduates and George Em. Marica. Marica was a sociologist trained in the interwar period who specialized in sociological theory with a dissertation about Durkheim, pursued postgraduate studies in Germany at the end of the 1920s, taught at the University of Cluj until 1948, and was brought back to research in the first half of the 1960s. Together with one of the two philosophy graduates, Mária Demeter, Negru conducted studies of mass culture in the 1970s and

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

early 1980s as part of two large-scale research projects contracted and coordinated by Ion Aluaş.

Aluaş organized a laboratory for sociological research at the University of Cluj after the model of the one established by Miron Constantinescu in Bucharest, and is widely recognized as having been the central figure of the sociological community in Cluj. A specialist in the sociology of Weber, Aluaş was also a tireless organizer of fieldwork, at which the university students participated, similarly to Bucharest. After a modest start in the village where he was born, Aluaş skillfully negotiated with local party and state authorities to expand the research into a study of modernization processes in the entire region, Ţara Oaşului, over almost half a decade. The second long-term project, on the systematization of the Apuseni Mountains, was based on the same technique of compiling summary descriptions of the villages in the region, which collected quantitative data specifically intended to inform regional planning, territorial reorganization, and development and modernization processes. Within this framework, in 1981 Negru and Demeter elaborated a methodology for analyzing the functionality and efficiency of cultural institutions based on three indicators, for cinemas, cultural houses, and libraries. Using statistical data for over one hundred and fifty communes in five counties in the Apuseni Mountains area, collected over ten years, they also proposed three alternatives for constructing a hierarchy of rural settlements, intended as a tool for the assessment of their "degree of viability" and future potential for development.[60]

[60] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 1/1981, Mária Demeter and Andrei Negru, "Rolul parametrilor culturali în determinarea şi potenţarea reţelei de aşezări rurale" [The role of cultural parameters in determining and improving the rural settlement network].

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

As the Apuseni Mountains project ended, Negru dedicated himself to the history of interwar sociology in Transylvania. While explaining that this was closer to his original interest in history, he nevertheless expressed regret for the "uselessness" of sociological research as pursued in the absence of outside contacts and without being taken into consideration in policy making. Negru maintained that the role of sociology, both before and after 1989, should have been that of "social engineering" and that it was not the idea itself which was flawed, but the way it was realized in practice. Finally, he reflected on the perpetuation of similar problems under different guises in the post-socialist period: whereas in the past sociologists had to invent research topics themselves, and as Negru explained it was the few sociologists who specialized abroad who were able to continue publishing and researching new issues, now sociologists had to pursue topics which "the West" was interested in and willing to fund (he specifically mentioned Roma studies). Indeed, for Negru there was no alternative to the epistemic assumptions of sociology as they had been laid out in the second half of the 1960s, consolidated institutionally, and reproduced in empirical research in the 1970s, exactly because they had been frustrated under both state socialism and capitalism.

The account of D. B., who graduated from the philosophy department at the University of Bucharest in the second half of the 1970s and shared a very similar perspective to Negru on sociology as a science of social engineering, is illustrative for what might have made the difference between alienation and engagement in the 1980s: intellectual mentorship, access to a transnational scientific network, and the support of a stable community locally, perceived as sharing a similar scientific, political, and generational ethos.[61] Like other graduates from the philosophy section, D. B. credited Ludwig

[61] The oral history interview with D. B. was conducted by the Master's student A.-I. T. in March 2011, as an assignment for an oral history course taught by Prof. Zoltán Rostás at the National University of

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Grünberg, Niculae Bellu, Radu Florian, and Ion Ianoşi for having fostered small informal discussion groups, often at their home, on issues of social philosophy, epistemology, and aesthetics from a critical Marxist perspective. "At the faculty of philosophy," he explained, "studying Marxism was a form of dissidence, a sort of resistance through culture as the writers say; studying Marxism starting from the actual texts, not talking on the basis of party documents."

He recalled that Radu Florian, in particular, modelled for the students the fact that theory was not just an end in itself, but a tool to make visible that which was not accessible empirically. Social philosophy, from this perspective, was animated by a practical ethos: "Leaving aside that they also sold us illusions, Radu Florian projected it like this: He said, 'you have to become specialists in social contradictions, because you will have to be experts in solving them!' We saw ourselves on the command panel, pushing buttons, solving social contradictions." Yet in order to bridge theory and social reality, D. B. argued with reference to the role of social sciences at the present as well, what was needed was "social engineering," a phrase he believed people avoided because they associated it with Stalin and prolecultist poetry: "it sounds horrible," he concluded his thought about the need for social engineering, "but it is true."

As a student, D. B. participated at field research in Berivoieşti, applying the value orientations questionnaire brought to Romania by E. Pendleton Banks, which he found extremely interesting. After graduation, he was hired as scientific secretary at one of the local branches of the Youth Research Center, which he perceived as fostering "a freedom of research unbelievable for communist Romania," in no small part because of the ministers of youth, including Nicu Ceauşescu, Nicolae Ceauşescu's son. Apart

Political Science and Public Administration. Transcript of the interview from the private oral history archive of Prof. Rostás.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

from the institutional freedom to do "honest research," D. B. identified two main advantages of the center. First, it was well connected with similar institutions in Europe. The director of the center, Ovidiu Bădina, who has also the founder and first president of the Research Committee 34 on Youth of the International Sociological Association (1974–86), fostered systematic international cooperation through the center, and a global perspective on the topic of youth.[62]

Second, the center was the only sociological institution to systematically organize its own conferences several times each year, in different cities throughout the country in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, at a time when funding for research had otherwise plummeted. "We were like a scientific community," D. B. reflected, narrowing down on the same relationship between freedom and utility as Negru, but with a markedly different emphasis: "We met and we shared exactly what we had discovered, there was an extraordinary freedom of expression, incredible. I admit that the decision-makers only joined for the plenary opening, they didn't take part at the panels; and that what we said was not taken into consideration." He nevertheless considered that youth research had allowed for some of the most sophisticated sociological approaches at the time, first of all because of the constant contact with researchers from similar institutes abroad.

D. B. discussed at length the study conducted during his time at the center which he "held dearest." Inspired by Jean Piaget's distinction between values of finality (determined by moral and juridical norms) and values of yields (determined by an

[62] When Bădina's theoretical volume on "Youth in the contemporary world," synthetizing his work in the field, could not be published in Romania in the mid-1980s, it was published in Bulgarian instead. The 400-page volume, which was never translated into Romanian, was reportedly referred to as the "youth bible" among East European sociologists of youth. See Siyka Kovatcheva, "Obituary," December 1999, http://www.rc34youth.org/obituary/.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

analysis of costs and benefits),[63] D. B. had a moment of breakthrough: "I read this, and I realized why all our studies of youth turned out wonderful… the Romanian youth was the ideal youth. In reality, lazy, slackers… our students included. We weren't lying, our research was correct, and then I realized that in fact they responded at the level of values of finality, which they had appropriated very well through education." Consequently, he designed a study of students' attitudes towards work in which he tested not just their values of finality but also their values of yields, revealing that in terms of an ideal job most were hoping for the possibility to travel, for less hierarchy and oversight, and for better pay.

> The conclusion was as follows: drop the propaganda, because the propaganda reached its goal, people share the values of finality of a society based on work, which acknowledges people based on the quantity and quality of work, exactly as socialism was in the books and never in reality. And I say, now what follows is to humanize the process of labor—that is, for us to intervene in reality, at the level of industry, at the level of agriculture, because if you get your hands dirty and the lathe breaks down in five minutes, what kind of satisfaction can you still have? It's in vain to write "Workers, love work!" on the walls, because there's nothing to love.

With this, the disciple of a generation of Marxist intellectuals rising against the dogmatically understood preeminence of the economic base over the superstructure recovered the power of the original argument, only to turn it against what was gradually being constructed as a new privileged class by virtue of their political power.

After he presented his results at one of the regular conferences organized by the Youth Research Center in Bucharest, D. B. recalled, he was attacked by people in high political positions and asked to recant, only to have a sociology graduate from one of the first cohorts take his side: "Leave the man alone, what do you have against him? He

[63] D. B.'s was Piaget's presentation at the 1966 World Congress of Sociology in Evian, translated in Romanian in 1967. Jean Piaget, "Problema mecanismelor comune în ştiinţele despre om" [The issue of common mechanisms in the human sciences], in *Sociologia contemporană* [Contemporary sociology] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1967), 26–57.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

described the instruments, he did honest research, he arrived at some results, what if he contradicts some official theses? He is right." Reflecting on the solidarity of his colleague, D. B. identified their position with a generational struggle "against these dinosaurs, these rhinoceros, as Eugen Ionescu would say," adding that "the fight is also the fight against your own rhinocerization, as an individual, all the time, even today." Originally a metaphor for the fascistization of the young generation of intellectuals in the interwar period, its use here illustrates well the reading of the 1980s in terms of "totalitarianism" by a generation who felt they had experienced, in the words of D. B., the "unprecedented divorce in the modern history of Romania between truth and power."

4. *Conclusions*

Beginning in the second half of the 1960s, the issue of participation was articulated in studies of mass culture which approximated the militant sociology of the interwar period and attempted to mobilize the agency of the subjects of research as a resource for cultural edification. Given a new lease on life by the party shif to ideological and normative modes of administration in the early 1970s, this approach was nevertheless gradually replaced by a structuralist-functionalist one, looking to diagnose the dysfunctionalities in the system of culture. The goal of researchers from the Institute of Philosophy was no longer to engage people in research *cum* cultural action, but to mediate the epistemic anxieties stemming from the assumed lack of transparency of social reality through theory and methodology, and thus contribute to the scientific management of cultural activities. Over time the systemic approach also revealed the unintended consequences of mass culture, such as the homogenization of cultural interests coupled with decreased participation. Yet this remained inherently ambiguous,

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especially compared to the studies of mass culture conducted at the University of Bucharest, which specifically researched the issue of equal participation at culture.

Towards the end of the 1970s, the systemic approach was challenged from a critical Marxist perspective which proposed that mass media was not merely unable to foster participation, but as the case of television showed over years of opinion surveys, it actively directed social energies away from participation and social action. This insight translated into the critique of the Soviet system as a non-systemic, synchretic society kept together not through cultural hegemony and people's participation, but through coercion.

Finally, for the sociologists trained under state socialism, moving beyond a systemic approach to mass culture and its implicit understanding of participation as merely an attribute of a functional system depended on the intellectual and institutional context in which they were active. The more isolated maintained the need for social engineering but did not challenge the agency of the state, except on the point of failing to integrate expertise to decision making. The sociologists who were better embedded into sociological communities in Romania or abroad either emigrated or gradually developed a critical attitude towards the self-serving studies of propaganda which confirmed people's participation at socialist culture and its system of values in normative terms, but failed to account for their actual needs.

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Chapter 5. On Equality:
Studies about women's emancipation

In October 1986, *The New York Review of Books* published anonymously an article on "Birth and Death in Romania," which had been written by Pavel Câmpeanu. The pronatalist legislation adopted in 1966, Câmpeanu argued, detailing the check-ups, punishments, and death that women faced following the banning of abortion, marked the further expansion of the regime's policies for independence from the Soviet Union, which now covered "the most intimate experiences of private life." Câmpeanu contradicted the claim that the pronatalist measures responded to a demographic crisis, and instead pointed to statistics being misused to justify recurring coercive measures against women accused of resisting the pronatalist policies. Statistics also failed to give an accurate picture of the growth of infant mortality rates, he explained, speculating that this was achieved by way of a policy to only release a newborn's birth certificate one month after the birth was declared, thus avoiding having to register any deaths occurring within that month.

In a concluding paragraph quoting the words of the author's supposed source in Romania (to protect Câmpeanu, the article was said to have been written by a foreign traveler to the country), he pleaded with his American readers to face the reality of the women, children, and elderly being "assassinated peacefully every day" by way of the demographic policies of the communist regime. "The reality of repression evolves much faster than your representation of it," Câmpeanu explained in the original Romanian text, shortened in the English translation: "Repression no longer means the

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Gulag, deprivation of one's legal state of freedom, but the repressive organization of the legal state of freedom itself."[1]

Câmpeanu's article was remarkable not just for its emphasis on the depressing realities of everyday life in Romania, for documenting the misery caused by the banning of abortion, or even for its implicit criticism of the "West" for its complicity in the perpetuation of a regime of "repressively structured freedom." These fell well within the broader shift towards human rights in critical discourses from the Eastern bloc beginning in the second half of the 1970s, which reflected an even earlier move to accommodate human rights and socialist ideals in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.[2] Câmpeanu's article was remarkable because it included a woman's voice on the topic of women's lack of reproductive rights, in the form of a poem by Ana Blandiana originally published in December 1984 in the student magazine *Amfiteatru*. Following the poem's publication, Câmpeanu explained, it had been copied widely, in a paradoxical case of samizdat from an official publication. Entitled "Children's Crusade," everyone understood it to reference the banning of abortion. As this chapter will show, this was, indeed, truly exceptional.

I begin with a discussion of the pronatalist policies of the Ceauşescu regime from the perspective of the intellectual history of women's studies and feminism. Specifically, I ask what high-level policy making might tell us about the thematic horizon of the research on women's social condition in the 1970s and 1980s, from which the issue of reproductive rights was almost entirely absent. I argue that beginning in the second half

[1] Pavel Câmpeanu, "Naşterea şi moartea în România" [Birth and death in Romania], in *Ceauşescu: Anii numărătorii inverse* [Ceauşescu: The countdown] (Iaşi: Polirom, 2002), 278. 268–79. For the English translation, published on 23 October 1986 in *The New York Review of Books*, see Name Withheld (Pavel Câmpeanu), "Birth and Death in Romania, October 1986," *Making the History of 1989*, Item #694, http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/items/show/694.

[2] See Paul Betts, "Socialism, Social Rights, and Human Rights: The Case of East Germany," *Humanity* 3, no. 3 (2012): 407–426.

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of the 1960s, women's emancipation was articulated as a social issue in terms of (in)equality, and map the elaboration of methodologies able to account for inequalities not just preceding, but resulting from new economic arrangements; different perspectives from which double labor was constructed as the main locus of inequality; and the ways in which second-wave feminism and globalization spoke to the concerns of women's emancipation under state socialism. Reproductive rights were the blind spot of the discourses constructed around the issue of equality, since, as one of the most outspoken writers on women's emancipation put it: "the laws of biology do not accept equity and refuse that women and men give birth equally, or at least take turns."[3] Yet I argue that the decoupling of biological, economic, and social reproduction, while it made possible that the issue of women's reproductive duty was never publicly questioned, also made it possible to articulate a critique of biological essentialism and to redefine equality not as a legal state but as a conscious and continuous social process.

1. *Biological, economic, and social reproduction decoupled*

Setting the stage for debates on women's condition in late socialist Romania is one of the most documented policies towards women in the Eastern bloc, the 1966 severe restriction of abortion. Part of a package of predominantly negative pronatalist measures meant to reverse the steady decline in birthrates diagnosed by medical statisticians, the diversity of expert, intellectual, and ideological arguments it engendered is but the most striking embodiment of the post-Stalinist decoupling of the biological, economical, and social aspects of women's mobilization in the construction

[3] Ecaterina Oproiu, "Două întrebări-cheie" [Two key questions], *Cartea fetelor* [The book of girls] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1977), 80.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

of socialism, reflected in the decades-long negotiation of women's roles opened in the early 1960s.

Initially the object of curiosity at a time of more widespread demographic anxieties,[4] the pronatalist policies have gradually come to represent, since the late 1980s, a grim cautionary tale about the human costs of state intervention in the private lives of its citizens.[5] More recently, comparative analyses have put the Romanian case into perspective as a particularly crude and inflexible variation on a set of pronatalist practices (regulating the access to abortion and to contraceptive measures, providing socioeconomic incentives) adopted and adapted throughout Eastern Europe, as well as across the Iron Curtain.[6] What set it apart was the early and severe restriction of abortion, the unavailability of contraceptive measures, also banned in 1985, and the unwillingness to experiment with financial incentives, considered too costly, despite the fact that this mix of measures, contemporary observers noted, did not secure a birthrate above that of Eastern bloc countries where abortion on demand had not been restricted.[7]

An interest in the types of knowledge, expertise, and agency mobilized in policy making has in the past years led to a more detailed reconstruction of the conflicting interests

[4] On the interest of Western, and especially French demography in the pronatalist policies experimented with in the Eastern Bloc, see Corina Doboş, "Beyond Ideologies: East European Demographic Experiments across the Iron Curtain," in Adela Hîncu and Victor Karady, eds., *Social Sciences in the Other Europe since 1945* (Budapest: Past Inc., Center for Historical Studies, forthcoming).

[5] Gail Kligman, introduction to *The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceauşescu's Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). In her seminal ethnography of Romanian state socialism and its politics of reproduction, Kligman proposed a reading of the social practices they engendered centered on the notion of duplicity. This has opened the field to lived experience and the integration of personal narratives, yet understandably also circumscribed the social to its articulation to the state.

[6] Corina Doboş, Luciana M. Jinga, and Florin S. Soare, *Politica pronatalistă a regimului Ceauşescu* [The pronatalist politics of the Ceauşescu regime], vol. 1: *O perspectivă comparată* [A comparative perspective] (Iaşi: Polirom, 2010).

[7] William Moskoff, "Pronatalist Policies in Romania," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 28, no. 3 (1980): 597–614.

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involved in the process. "Demographic growth was treated like any other economic project of the communist regime," concluded a comprehensive survey of the institutions and practices which shaped pronatalism in late socialist Romania; what contributed to its "de-humanization" was the institutional prioritization of political (i.e., economic) interests over expertise (medical, demographical, etc.).[8] The latter argument has been substantiated by archival research and oral history interviews on the decision-making process around the severe restriction of abortion in 1966. A complex, "technocratic" approach to the pressing issue of falling birthrates, which supported social provisions and material incentives, the educated use of contraceptive measures, and the restriction of abortion for certain categories of women, was dismissed in favor of a radical version of the latter, dubbed the "political" solution.[9] Moreover, concerns of members of the National Women's Council, especially regarding the protection of the most vulnerable social categories affected by a possible abortion ban—children and poor mothers—were not only not taken into consideration, but also went largely unrecorded in official documents.[10]

The boundaries between technocratic, politico-economic, and advocacy approaches to reproduction policies, however, are not easily drawn. The 1966 expert study on the issue of natality which was the basis for discussion among the high-ranking party members involved in decision making was authored by a commission of representatives

[8] Corina Doboş and Cristina Roman, *Politica pronatalistă a regimului Ceauşescu*, vol. 2: *Instituţii şi practici* [Institutions and practices] (Iaşi: Polirom, 2011), 246.
[9] Corina Pălăşan, "Caracterul restrictiv al politicii pronataliste în România comunistă (1966–1989)" [The restrictive character of the pronatalist policies in Communist Romania (1966–1989)], in Ruxandra Ivan, ed., *"Transformarea socialistă": Politici ale regimului comunist între ideologie şi administraţie* ["The socialist transformation": Policies of the communist regime between ideology and administration] (Iaşi: Polirom, 2009), 148–71. Florin S. Soare, "Ceauşescu's Population Policy: A Moral or an Economic Choice between Compulsory and Voluntary Incentivised Motherhood?," *European Journal of Government and Economics* 2, no. 1 (2013): 59–78.
[10] Raluca Maria Popa, "'We Opposed It': The National Council of Women and the Ban on Abortion in Romania (1966)," *Aspasia* 10, no. 1 (2016): 152–60.

from more than ten state institutions, including three ministries. The "complex measures" proposed to redress the decline in birthrates reflected an equally complex field of expertise, which strategically performed consensus, signaled disagreement, or obscured different sources of agency. The treatment of abortion is illustrative in this sense: the envisioned amendments to the 1957 decree legalizing abortion were identified as the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Social Provisions, which also held the committee's presidency; the proposal of the State Planning Committee and the State Committee for Labor and Wages to include among the exceptional circumstances (mostly medical) under which abortion could be approved consideration of the woman's civil status, housing conditions, and wage, was only registered separately, in a footnote; despite these being legislative changes, the Minister of Justice approved the material in an annex, in which he raised legal issues regarding the regulation of divorce; the position of the National Council of Women, which according to a former member opposed the restriction of abortion, was nowhere documented.[11] Overall, the issue of natality was formulated as one of national continuity (maintaining a certain proportion of the world population) and long-term economic planning (ensuring the necessary labor force for development), requiring financial investments as well as legislative changes.

As for the "political solution" to the problem of natality, the positions voiced during the party central committee discussion of the expert study, despite being in agreement about the need to restrict abortion, were very diverse in their articulation of the economic, social, and biological aspects of reproduction. Several members of the committee

[11] ANR, Fond C.C. al P.C.R., Secţia Cancelarie, file 101/1966, Ministerul Sănătăţii şi Prevederilor Sociale, "Studiu privind situaţia natalităţii din Republica Socialistă România şi propuneri de măsuri pentru redresarea natalităţii din ţara noastră" [Study on the situation of natality in the Socialist Republic of Romania and proposal of measures for redressing natality in our country]. I thank Corina Doboş for sharing with me digital copies of files 101/1966 and 102/1966, as well as invaluable insight into the workings of pronatalist policy making in state socialist Romania.

deemed the positive pronatalist measures which represented the overwhelming majority of the proposals put forward by the study "social demagogy," and recoiled at the idea that the party would appear to be "buying children" by offering financial incentives. Leonte Răutu suggested that the issue of natality should be brought to the public for discussion, and as the only member of the executive committee to refer to the National Women's Committee, mentioned that when the restriction of abortion was discussed, they argued that "abortion is a big achievement of the popular regime."[12] Unlike previous speakers, he regarded favorably financial incentives (taxation based on the size of the family), as they were being implemented in the Soviet Union, West Germany, Poland, the United States, or France.[13]

The president of the Council of Ministers, Ion Gheorghe Maurer, argued against a hastly state regulation of reproductive behavior. He agreed that reversing the 1957 legislation was a necessity but warned that it should be done in a "rational, wise manner," as "the family problem is a problem increasingly solved by the family itself—this is the evolution of society. We have to consider that we cannot impose on the family more children than the family wants to have."[14] Moreover, he insisted that the main reason for restricting abortion were the negative medical consequences, and not necessarily concerns regarding natality. This reflects the gradual medicalization of the issue of abortion since the early 1960s,[15] a development which became hegemonic in public

[12] ANR, Fund C.C. al P.C.R., Secţia Cancelarie, file 102/1966, "Stenograma şedinţei Comitetului Executiv al C.C. al P.C.R. din ziua de 2 august 1966" [Transcript of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party on 2 August 1966], 21. I thank Corina Doboş for generously sharing photocopies of files 101/1966 and 102/1966 with me, and for walking me through the scientific and political context to the adoption of the pronatalist policies in 1966.
[13] ANR, Fund C.C. al P.C.R., Secţia Cancelarie, file 101/1966, "Notă" [Report] (26 July 1966), 45–47.
[14] "Stenograma şedinţei," 18.
[15] Corina Doboş, "'Pentru sănătatea femeii!': Elemente ale discursului medical asupra întreruperii de sarcină" ["For women's health!": Elements of the medical discourse on abortion], in Anca Dohotariu, ed., *Familia în România, între social şi politic: O incursiune diacronică pluridisciplinară* [The family in Romania, between the social and the political: A diachronic pluridisciplinary account] (Bucharest: Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2017). Revising her earlier position on the distinction between technocratic and political approaches to the issue of abortion, Doboş offers a detailed analysis of the

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discourse after 1966, when topics related to reproduction and sexuality were addressed almost exclusively by medical professionals.[16]

Finally, Nicolae Ceauşescu, credited for having made the final decision on the issue of abortion, formulated it not so much in economic or medical, as in strong moral terms. The access to abortion and simplification of divorce procedures had in effect meant the "legalization of prostitution," he decried, whereas the goal of the party should have been to protect the natality and health of the population (as values in themselves).[17] Apart from immediately banning abortion, what the party could do to redress this situation was to educate the population: "The issue of natality is not just an issue of one's wish to have or not to have children, but a social issue; every person has obligations towards society. Of course, you cannot force anyone to have children, but this is a social problem and we have to explain to the population this responsibility."[18] There is a sense in which this was indeed the most "political" position of all, reproducing a vision of individual agency educated into the collective realization of a morally superior sociopolitical order. Yet the context of his undoubtedly orthodox Stalinist position, the expert study and the meeting of the executive committee, are illustrative for the decoupling of the economic, biological, and social aspects of reproduction, which despite the basic agreement about the need to restrict abortion, could be rearranged in strikingly different conceptual constellations, prioritizing economic rationality, individual will, or the moral imperative.

evolution of medical discourse on abortion since the early 1960s, showing how it was integrated into the 1966 expert study on natality. The study's focus on the social aspects of natality, she suggests, was probably meant to draw attention away from the responsibility of the Ministry of Health for the 1957 legalization of abortion.

16 On sexuality, see Erin K. Biebuyck, "The Collectivisation of Pleasure: Normative Sexuality in Post-1966 Romania," *Aspasia* 4 (2010): 49–70.

17 "Stenograma şedinţei," 24.

18 Ibid., 25.

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The seemingly paradoxical flourishing of critical approaches to the condition of women at the same time as abortion was restricted is in fact a reflection of the loosening of the tight knit political language of Stalinism. Virtually unchallenged on the issue of reproduction throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the relation between social and economic concerns in the lives of women was otherwise open to discussion, prompting the formulation of socialist, feminist, and neotraditionalist responses to women's emancipation. Family relations, the double burden, and sexism, in particular, emerged as topics which allowed the formulation of inequality in socioeconomic terms beginning in the second half of the 1960s.

2. *The family, theories of rural transformation, and feminist methodology*

Studies of the position of women within family structures were among the first faced with not just the issue of persistent inequalities, so-called "remnants" of patriarchal patterns of social organization, but also with inequalities emerging from the new postwar economic arrangements—particularly agricultural cooperatives and the expanding industry. In what follows I discuss two strands of research on family structures from the late 1960s, how they constructed the social circumstances of women's lives as a sociological issue in the 1970s, and how their political implications were formulated in the 1980s. The two sociologists whose works I bring in here, Mihail Cernea and Natalia Damian, published on the topic both while still in Romania and following their emigration—in 1974 to the United States and 1978 to Israel, respectively. While it is clear that the extent to which the details of their case studies and the theoretical conclusions could be spelled out depended on where they were published, this will not be in itself the focus of my analysis. Rather, I follow the logic of the configuration of women as sociological actors in state socialism as a

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heterogenous process by default, integrating disparate intellectual sources to describe social realities which were in any case not covered by the existing sociological literature, either foreign or local.

As discussed at length in the previous chapter, Cernea and his colleagues at the Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian Academy had been involved in rural monographic research since 1966–67, repurposing the methodological toolkit and expertise of interwar rural sociology for an international comparative project on technical innovation in rural areas coordinated by the French sociologist Henri Mendras. In studying the changing structure of peasant families, as well, Cernea's starting point was monographic research from the early 1930s. In his 1969 article dedicated to the topic,[19] Cernea identified as basis for comparison the works of Henri H. Stahl and Xenia Costa-Foru on the transformation of egalitarian, communal forms of rural organization under the pressure of the capitalist economy.[20] Reconfigured as an individual production unit, he argued based on their findings, the family was becoming increasingly autonomous from the village as a whole. At the same time, the traditional hierarchical organization of families was doubled by the economic function of each of its members. The head of the household, in particular, held both moral authority and, as owner, the right to distribute and reward work within the family.

Against this image of the rural family specific to capitalist economic organization, Cernea painted the picture of the emerging rural cooperatives, which by creating a professional hierarchy separate from that of the family, decoupled members' economic

[19] Mihail Cernea, "Schimbări ale structurii familiei ţărăneşti în cooperativele agricole" [Changes in the structure of peasant families in agricultural cooperatives], *Revista de filozofie* 16, no. 8 (1969): 1009–1022.
[20] Henri H. Stahl and Xenia Costa-Foru, "Caracterul devălmaş al familiei nerejene" [The joint proprietor character of the Nerej family], *Arhiva pentru Ştiinţă şi Reformă Socială* 10, nos. 1–4 (1932); Xenia Costa-Foru, *Cercetarea monografică a familiei: Contribuţie metodologică* [The monographic study of the family: Methodological contribution] (Bucharest: Fundaţia Regele Mihai I, 1945).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

and social roles. The head of the household, while losing his role as coordinator of production, saw his authority and discretionary power curbed, as well; conversely, as they became individual producers of the agricultural cooperative, family members experienced increasingly more freedom within the family, and were liberated from the traditional expectations regarding marriage, work, and education. Cernea described a slow and uneven process which would eventually lead to a change in traditional family roles according to the changed economic functions of the family members. Anticipating the main lines of research on the condition of rural women specifically, Cernea identified urbanization, and especially mass labor migration and the emergence of the category of worker-peasant, as main factors in the redistribution of labor and authority in the village, with consequences for both the role of the absent family member and the situation of those tied to agricultural work.

Overall, this image of the peasantry and of changes in family structures drew from both the historical sociology of the interwar period and the lively contemporary French school of rural studies, which was galvanizing a dizzying array of intellectual sources (from the American anthropology of peasant communities in South America to Russian populist agrarian studies to contemporary Marxist analyses of the peasantry) for a "theory of the peasantry."[21] Cernea, who had spent 1967 in Paris with the research group of Henri Mendras,[22] recorded social change in the village in the vein of the "disappearance of the peasant"—that is, of autonomous forms of social organization in the industrial society. However, following a fellowship at the University of Stanford Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Studies, in 1970–71, where he continued

[21] Henri Mendras, "The Invention of the Peasantry: A Moment in the History of Post–World War II French Sociology," *Revue française de sociologie* 43, no. 1 (2002): 157–71.
[22] Rostás, "Viețile sociologului Cernea."

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

his study of changing family structures in rural Romania,[23] he produced a theory of agricultural cooperatives as bureaucratic organizations.[24] Contemporary rural sociology, presumably in the French tradition which he was most familiar with, had not studied cooperatives as a distinct socioeconomic form of organization, a gap which Cernea sought to fill in relying on the American structural-functionalist sociology of organizations. On the one hand, this allowed him to partly account for the coercive aspects of collectivization by depersonalizing them as "social pathologies" characteristic of modern bureaucratic organizations more generally.[25] On the other hand, the issue of social inequalities, particularly as reproduced within the family, was largely subsumed to the analysis of the (dis)functional relationship between the cooperative and the primary family group.

Studying the successive statutes of the cooperatives, Cernea concluded that the organization was moving towards integrating the (nuclear) family in production as a group, rather than as individual members in separate working teams. The reason for this was that the family proved better equipped to mobilize, motivate, and manage the use of its labor (through emotional ties, structures of authority, etc.), as illustrated, in particular, by the higher productivity of individual family plots compared to the cooperative. In this way, argued Cernea, "the productive economic function of the peasant family was not wholly obliterated through the creation of the large cooperative farms."[26] The cooperative chose to use the family's decision-making power to the

[23] For the study he completed while at Stanford, see Mihail Cernea, *Changing Society and Family Change: The Impact of the Cooperative Farm on the Peasant Family* (Stanford: Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, 1971).
[24] Mihail Cernea, "Elemente pentru o sociologie a cooperativei agricole" [Elements for a sociology of the agricultural cooperative], *Viitorul social* 1, no. 2 (1972): 379–93.
[25] Mihail Cernea, *Sociologia cooperativei agricole* [The sociology of the agricultural cooperative] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1974), 56–61.
[26] Mihail Cernea, "The Large-Scale Formal Organization and the Family Primary Group." Journal of Marriage and Family 37, no. 4 (1975): 935.

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benefit of the organization, yet this power relied on traditional structures of authority within the family. These were largely reproduced. Women were shown to have more authority in the family, especially when the husbands worked outside of the village, but even in such cases the decision-making power was retained by the head of the household.[27] In effect, the system of economic organization, while evolving to maximize its efficiency, relied on the gender inequalities within the family.

Natalia Damian's research on changes in family structures in the process of urbanization in the Slatina-Olt region was conducted at around the same time as Cernea's. As a PhD student under the supervision of the philosopher Tudor Bugnariu, Damian was part of the large-scale sociological project initiated by Miron Constantinescu in 1966 and coordinated, among others, by Henri H. Stahl at the Sociology Department of the University of Bucharest.[28] A newly and rapidly industrialized region, Slatina-Olt offered the opportunity to study the social consequences of economic transformation as they were happening, particularly with regard to women's integration in productive labor. While ensuring economic independence from their husbands, this was also expected to increase women's overall workload unless household labor, including childrearing, was socialized as well as redistributed among family members.

Damian first presented the results of her research at the conference of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population held in London in 1969, where she offered a remarkably candid picture of the situation of women in both the newly industrialized urban center and its agricultural peripheries at the end of the 1960s. In the city, women's equal access to education improved their unequal standing compared to their husbands;

[27] Ibid., 228–29.
[28] Damian defended her PhD dissertation on the topic in 1972.

however, women were much less integrated in industrial labor than men, and almost entirely unrepresented in positions of management; the infrastructure for childcare was insufficient; women worked on average 13–14 hours daily, and had little time for social, cultural, and leisure time activities; finally, while most women reported receiving some help from their husbands with household activities, childrearing was still overwhelmingly considered their responsibility alone. In the surrounding rural areas, on the other hand, women's status improved with their integration in agricultural cooperatives and their contribution to the family budget; the extended family groups were increasingly reduced to smaller families of two-three generations; skills were no longer passed from fathers to sons, but through professional training, which meant less authority for the parent and more independence for the youth; also, as most men were working in industry and either commuting or absent for long periods of time, women took over the responsibilities of the head of the household, managed the family's finances, and gained both authority and decision-making power within the household as a result.[29]

This short study published in English (in Romania, as well) maps almost all the main domains in which women's social inequality will be explored throughout the 1970s: education, professional integration, advancement to leadership positions, and social reproductive labor (with very few exceptions, sexuality remained a taboo topic in the social sciences). In her contribution to the monographic study of the Slatina-Olt region, however, Damian's focus was on translating the realities of social inequality in methodological and theoretical terms. In this, I argue, she was animated by concerns not unlike those underpinning the debates on feminist epistemology emerging in 1970s

[29] Natalia Damian, "Woman's Position in the Process of Urbanization: The Case of the Slatina Area (Romania)," *Analele Universităţii Bucureşti: Sociologie* 18, no. 1 (1969): 57–63.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Western academia. This is also the standpoint from which she later formulated her critique of state socialism as a system built on the reproduction of inequality.

Similarly to Cernea, Damian conceived of the family as both a reflection of the social whole and a social agent in its own terms. Moreover, she argued that it was not just the changes in family structure caused by urbanization which played this double role—chiefly the fact that the family no longer represented a production unit and was reduced to the nuclear type—but the changes in the roles of family members as well. Whereas to Cernea this had largely been a secondary concern to a vision of macrosocial change, Damian placed the emancipation of women and youth—the former from being confined to the home, the latter from the parents' authority—and their increased social mobility at the core of her investigation. To focus on women in particular, both a new methodology of empirical research and a new theory of the social were needed: the one accounting for women not just as a nominal category, but rendering them meaningful as social actors; the other placing the very relationship between women and men at the core of the vision of the social.

Damian's proposal came as a reaction to the original conditions of the empirical research: although meant to be a study of families, for the sampling of the population the research team had to rely on data about the heads of the household only—that is, the husbands. The data had been collected for the 1968 household census by the local administration and was also incomplete, which meant that the results of the study were not, in the end, representative. Damian, however, turned the original methodological bias of the census into the very research question of the study:

> The procedure, widely used in "quick" surveys, of substituting the analysis and interpretation of data at the level of the heads of the households to the analysis and interpretation at the level of family collectives is supported by the following implicit (and probably often unconscious) idea: family collectives are the result of

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> endogrouping tendencies (mutual marital selection within a classification group: for instance, male workers with female workers, male office clerks with female office clerks, etc). *Here one can observe that the method becomes closely intertwined with the theory: the method is validated through a global social process*.[30]

Damian's research focused on partners' tendency to mutually select based on their level of education, profession, and sociogeographical place of origin, an analysis then replicated in an empirical study conducted in 1970.[31] Her findings were twofold: on the one hand, she concluded that the characterization of families based on one of the members alone was abusive, and involved systematic distortion,[32] as women, men, and youth were to different degrees agents of social homogenization and social mobility. On the other hand, she argued that marital choices were sociologically meaningful—that is, that they reflected not simply individual preference but structural constraints, such as the lack of opportunities for socialization.[33] Overall, inequalities between men and women in terms of profession or level of education were not simply numerical, but a consequence of processes of homogenization and social mobility, as well.

Damian's research reached a conclusion not entirely different than that of Cernea: inequalities between women and men were (re)produced at various levels under state socialism. And yet, writing about the situation of women in Romania many years after she had emigrated, Damian expressed profound disagreement with Cernea. The bone of contention was the so-called "feminization of agriculture," yet it reflected the politicization of a deeper epistemological divide, already implied in Damian's questioning of the circularity between methodology and theory. Writing in 1978, Cernea described the feminization of agriculture, the large increase in the percentage

[30] Natalia Damian, "Schimbări ale structurilor familiale în cadrul procesului de urbanizare [Changes of family structures in the process of urbanization], in Miron Constantinescu and H. H. Stahl, eds., *Procesul de urbanizare în R. S. România: Zona Slatina-Olt*, 212.
[31] Natalia Damian, "Perspective de abordare structural-sociologică a grupurilor familiale" [Perspectives of a structural-sociological approach to family groups], *Viitorul social* 1, no. 1 (1972): 137–45.
[32] Damian, "Schimbări ale structurilor familiale," 226–27.
[33] Damian, "Perspective de abordare structural-sociologică," 144.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

of women engaged in Romanian agriculture in the 1960s and 1970s, as a "latent function" of collectivization and industrialization—that is, an unintended, unanticipated consequence of centrally planned macrosocial change.[34] In the absence of their husbands engaged in industrial labor, women were shown to perform a threefold economic role as members of the cooperatives, workers on the family plot, and managers of the household. They had little time for leisure or education, and little opportunity for advancement. In addition, despite the increased authority which economic participation lent them, traditional values within the family prevailed. "Even under circumstances of radical macrosocial change," concluded Cernea, "it appears that a long time will be needed to alter both their economic roles and situation in the peasant household and the cultural values that are hindering change."[35]

Natalia Damian, writing together with her husband Liviu Damian, also a sociologist, opposed this via an analysis of Romanian agricultural policy as systematically, rather than unintendedly engendering inequality. It was not simply the "feminization of agriculture," a proportional increase in the *number* of women engaged in agriculture, which defined this policy, but the value (both pay and status) assigned to their work—preponderantly manual—compared to other types of nonmanual, mechanized, or administrative labor: "the main inner characteristic of the contemporary agricultural labor force is a striking polarization of males and females, related to different specific activities, to different types of farms, and to different statuses."[36] Echoing Damian's previous insistence on the need to develop relational methodologies, this placed women's discrimination at the core of economic policy.

[34] Mihail Cernea, "Macrosocial Change, Feminization of Agriculture and Peasant Women's Threefold Economic Role," Sociologia Ruralis 18, nos. 2–3 (1978): 108.
[35] Ibid., 120.
[36] Natalia Damian and Liviu Damian, "On Women's Work in Rumanian Agriculture," *International Review of Sociology* 1, no. 1 (1990): 155.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

One way to think about the difference between Cernea's and Damian's approach is to prioritize the question of how they viewed political agency. As formulated by the economist William Moskoff, who himself researched the topic of women's socioeconomic situation in Romania on a Fulbright-Hays fellowship in 1976: "Is the role played by women in the Romanian economy a result of conscious policies designed to have an impact on them and place them in a subordinate situation, or is it the outcome of a set of unintended consequences resulting from policies designed to address other problems?"[37] While Damian would argue the former, the other of a policy of discrimination would not be a set of unintended consequences, but a policy of equality between men and women. And while Cernea did describe the feminization of agriculture as a "latent function" of economic policy, one should remember that he had specifically chosen Robert Merton's concept because it had been developed as a critique of "classical," or Parsonian structural-functionalism, which "justified ideologically the existing social system."[38] The opposite of discrimination as an unintended consequence of economic transformation, for Cernea, was the naturalization of discrimination as merely a "function" of the system. The difference, then, was epistemological: with a realization that the very ways of knowing were political, developing a feminist methodology of research became a political option.

[37] William Moskoff, "Sex Discrimination, Commuting, and the Role of Women in Rumanian Development," *Slavic Review* 37, no. 3 (1978): 456. This and Moskoff's three other articles on women's condition in Romania read as the most rich and nuanced work on the topic published in the 1980s. Moskoff recalls that Romanian academics were extremely reluctant to collaborate with an American researcher at the time of his stay. Incidentally, Natalia Damian, to whom he was assigned, arranged that her students collect the answers to the survey questionnaire he designed (e-mail correspondence with William Moskoff, February 2018).

[38] Cernea, *Sociologia cooperativei agricole*, 58.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

3. *Defining inequality: reflections on the double burden*

Women's double/triple burden—paid labor, household labor, and political engagement— emerged as the single most salient issue around which discourses on women's inequality were articulated in the 1970s. As such it offers a cross-section of the diverse positions from which the contradictions of "women's emancipation" were accounted for in a corpus of works so far bundled together as "propaganda."[39] Some argued that economic measures were needed to redress inequality; others that sociopsychological factors, as well as personal idiosyncrasies, should be the focus of change; finally, a rise in political consciousness to match economic emancipation was envisaged. These all spoke to the broadly conceived "increase in the role of women in the economic, political, and social life of the country,"[40] a project put forward by the party central committee in 1973 and carried out with some success in the second half of the 1970s; as well as to the increase in the visibility of women around the 1975 international women's year and the ensuing UN "women's decade." Yet to my knowledge they were not "commissioned" any more than any other works carried out within the framework of centrally drawn research plans. The 1970s were an unprecedented platform for studies on women's socioeconomic situation, and the ensuing, often contradictory ideas, are characteristic for the mix of Marxist revisionist, liberal, populist, and anti-feminist thinking on women in the "normalized" Eastern bloc more broadly.

[39] See Petruţa Teampău, "The Romanian Red Body: Gender, Ideology, and Propaganda in the Construction of the 'New Man,'" *Ethnologia Balkanica*, no. 11 (2011): 208–9.

[40] The program covered the increased economic role of women, both in terms of the number of women employed and their labor productivity; the facilitation of their roles as mothers, and state support for childrearing and household labor; and the increase in the number of women in party and state leadership positions. See Luciana M. Jinga, *Gen şi reprezentare în România comunistă, 1944–1989* [Gender and representation in Communist Romania, 1944–89] (Iaşi: Polirom, 2015), 217–21.

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The first attempts to "quantify" inequality were analyses of workers' time budgets. While it was well known that working women had much less free time than men,[41] the extent of this inequality, the sociologist Francisc Albert wrote in 1970, had not been fully understood: the difference was calculated at almost two hours per day. At the time women represented 47% of the total workforce, and according to statistical data from the second half of the 1960s spent around thirty hours per week for housework, and so worked eighty-hour workweeks. On average, men spent three hours less on housework per day than women, and also prioritized it less. Moreover, compared to data obtained from stopwatch measurements, in self-reported surveys women declared that they had significantly more free time, and men declared slightly less,[42] suggesting that in addition to working more, women did not consider all household labor to be labor to begin with. When it came to housework, while unmarried women and unmarried men self-reported a very similar load, in the case of married men they overestimated their participation to such an extent compared to women's own estimate, that the statistically observed ratio of 1/3 (men's household labor/women's household labor) was significantly altered. Since this occurred specifically in the case of married men, Albert concluded that the subjective interpretation happened not at the level of men's evaluation of their own contribution to household labor, but already at the level of what men considered to be their tasks within the household to begin with.[43]

[41] One of the first surveys organized by the main women's magazine, *Femeia*—a new format meant to engage its readership in the identification and discussion of women's most pressing problems—was "Timpul… 'eterna' problem" [Time… the "eternal" problem]. Published in January 1966, it was but a first in a series of articles dedicated to women's double burden, marking the mainstreaming of issue related to women's socioeconomic inequality as a result of their multiple roles as workers, mothers, wives, and citizens.
[42] Francisc Albert, *Dialog cu timpul liber* [Dialogue with free time] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1970), 50–53.
[43] Ibid. 62–63.

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Albert suggested that a set of measures was needed to redress the inequality between men and women: old, patriarchal mentalities with regard to the distribution of household labor needed to change; rationalization of the living conditions and advances in technology would decrease the amount of labor; better services would help economize on time; and finally, household labor could be to a larger degree outsourced.[44] It is important to stress moving further that this overview of the double burden and the mix of solutions were widely accepted throughout the 1970s : whether the specific solutions outlined by the following three authors I discuss here responded to a growing disillusionment with the pace of transformation, or simply expanded upon already existing proposals, despite certain setbacks the first decade of the Ceauşescu regime was generally experienced as a time of improvement and liberalization in the life of women as "consumer-citizens."[45]

Writing in 1974, the psychologist Georgeta Dan-Spînoiu focused on the interplay between "objective" and "subjective" aspects of women's participation at productive labor. In principle, this held the promise of integrating subjectivity into the discussion of women's inequality, particularly as the idea that women, as well, contributed to the reproduction of their own subordination was gaining ground in public discourse. However, the discussion of the societal and psychological factors which precluded women's integration to labor, an interplay captured by what Dan-Spînoiu called women's "self-realization through work," largely reproduced the ideal of the "modern woman" as a worker, wife, and mother. The goal was to understand how these roles influenced each other, not question any of them separately. Women's motivation at

44 Ibid., 71–75.

45 See Jill Massino, "From Black Caviar to Blackouts: Gender, Consumption, and Lifestyle in Ceauşescu's Romania," in Paulina Bren and Mary Neuburger, eds., *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 226–53.

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work, for instance, was shown to be tied to a larger extent than men's to their material and family situation: "women consciously only worked up to a limit of performance which coincided to their material motivation as well as their wish for freedom of action and decision regarding effort."[46] This was something to be taken into consideration and worked around "carefully" in order to improve women's productivity while accounting for their parental attachments. It was true that a whole series of obstacles, both individual and structural, precluded women's self-realization through work: personal development, work capacity, the policy for the promotion of women at their workplace (i.e., discrimination against women in leadership positions[47]), and the family situation, including husbands' prejudice regarding their promotion, the tiredness caused by household labor, the lack of time for professional training, and worries for their children.[48] Proposing changes at the level of mentality or arguing for the restructuring of household labor, in this constellation, simultaneously meant reinforcing the naturalization of women's roles as mothers and their responsibility to participate into the workforce at their full potential.[49]

Speaking to her theoretical interest in the condition of women, Ana Gluvacov, a party member since 1941, who had held various low-ranking positions in the party apparatus and was a lecturer of political economy since the late 1950s, outlined her contribution as part of the controversy over the conjunctural or objective character of the large scale integration of women into the workforce. She argued that rephrasing the question in Marxist-Leninist terms was particularly necessary at a time when the socioeconomic

[46] Georgeta Dan-Spînoiu, *Factori obiectivi şi subiectivi în integrarea profesională a femeii* [Objective and subjective factors in women's professional integration] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1974), 87.
[47] This, too, had been widely discussed in the magazine *Femeia*, which throughout 1970, for instance, published the series "Poate femeia să conducă?" [Can the woman lead?].
[48] Dan-Spînoiu, *Factori obiectivi şi subiectivi*, 182–4.
[49] Ibid., 214–15.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

consequences of the "double burden" had led some to propose a return to the past and the traditional roles of men and women, and others to suggest that women should separately pursue their own education, their motherly role, and professional labor at different stages of their lives. As a solution to both traditionalist and technocratic approaches to women's condition, Gluvacov suggested that social realities of women's inequality should be reconsidered within Marxist-Leninist theory and praxis. The supposed identification between class relations and the relations between sexes had been supported with Engels's often quoted analysis of the subordination of women within the family as a consequence of men's economic supremacy. The elimination of economic exploitation, in this interpretation, was supposed to simultaneously eliminate the inequalities within the family. Gluvacov noted however that despite women's integration into production, "it is evident and historical experience confirmed that this is just the objective primordial premise for eliminating the inequality between sexes, between people in general."[50]

Apart from a fuller knowledge of the extent of women workers' inequality—in particularly in terms of education, professional training, and advancement in leadership positions—Gluvacov's solution involved taking the dialectical relationship between economic and social factors seriously. Women's integration to labor made the deep-rooted social inequalities governing family relations overt. Economic organization should in return be retaught, she argued, to purposely correct existing inequalities—for instance by ensuring adequate workplaces for women, providing for a flexible organization of work, especially for mothers, accounting for women's inability to commute long distances, devising work norms according to women's body and age,

[50] Ana Gluvacov, *Afirmarea femeii în viaţa societăţii: Dimensiuni şi semnificaţii în România* [Women's self-assertion on the life of society: Dimensions and meanings in Romania] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1975), 30.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

ensuring women's qualification and access to higher education.[51] From this perspective, Gluvacov treated the double burden not as the root cause, but the symptom of a broader discriminatory organization of labor, which it further worsened. An equitable redistribution of household labor should in the first place respond to the realities of women's position in the workforce—for instance, based on their generally higher level of education and qualification, men should participate more in children's education.[52]

It was not just women's integration into the workforce,[53] but also their increased political participation which was the goal of the 1970s. By the second half of the decade, this translated into a quota system for women party members, as well as in leadership positions, which was, in practice and in spite of concerted efforts, never achieved.[54] If Ecaterina Deliman's 1977 book on women as contemporary political actors is any indication, this was partly due to the inability to formulate women's socioeconomic issues—and the double burden in particular—as (Marxist-Leninist) political issues. Born in 1936 and having studied history in Moscow and taught at the Pedagogical Institute in Oradea, Deliman was a member of the party central committee between 1969 and 1974. She had read *Le deuxième sexe* and disagreed with Simone de Beauvoir on the issue of women's social versus biological nature.[55] On the topic of household labor specifically, Deliman followed the debates carried in the early 1970s in *Political*

[51] Ibid., 170–71.
[52] Ibid., 181. Beginning in the second half of the 1970s, this was emphasized in the media as well. With titles such as "Can we speak about a 'new father'?" (1976), "One learns the job of being a father" (1977), or "The emancipation of men" (1980), the *Femeia Almanac* modeled the new roles of fathers within the family, emphasizing their contribution to the education of children.
[53] On this topic, see also Aneta Spornic, *Utilizarea eficientă a resurselor de muncă feminine în România* [The efficient utilization of female labor resources in Romania] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R. S. România, 1975). The book was meant as a response to the UN international women's year and detailed the situation of the female labor force in Romania in terms of the country's particular vision of economic organization which relied on the large-scale integration of women in productive labor and on increasing the efficiency of their labor.
[54] Jinga, *Gen şi reprezentare*, 258–68.
[55] Ecaterina Deliman, *Femeia, personalitate politică în societatea noastră socialist* [The woman: Political personality in our socialist society] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1977), 19.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Affairs, the theoretical organ of the Communist Party in the United States, yet reflected neither on the analysis of household labor as reproductive labor, performed by women so that the men could produce more surplus value,[56] nor on the rebuttal of this vision of women's exploitation by their husbands as undermining the united class struggle.[57] Rather, Deliman agreed with the conclusion that incorporating women in large numbers in production was not in itself a guarantee of their complete liberation,[58] suggesting that what was needed for the development of their political consciousness was theoretical literacy, an understanding of the objectives of the party: "As long as women are only concerned with the economic aspects of their ontological condition, they will remain within the limits of an embryo consciousness."[59]

Further, by describing the issue of women's inequality to men within the family in terms of "tradition" or "habit," and avoiding to formulate it as a shared political concern, Deliman placed the responsibility for emancipation on women themselves. As mothers, moreover, they were expected to fight prejudice regarding their subordinate role "on the one hand in the interest of their own becoming [*devenire*], and on the other hand to create a new 'heredity,' to the benefit of future generations."[60] Clear on the point that economic participation alone does not liberate women, Deliman's proposal was that conscious political participation would. Similar to Dan-Spînoiu's solution in its naturalization of the roles of mother and worker, Deliman's perspective further subsumed individual self-realization to the achievement of a collective political consciousness.

[56] Isabel Larguia and John Dumoulin, "Towards a Science of Women's Liberation," *Political Affairs* 51, no. 8 (1972).
[57] Margaret Cowl, "Economic Role of the Housewife," *Political Affairs* 51, no. 8 (1972): 52–62.
[58] Deliman, *Femeia*, 47.
[59] Ibid., 64.
[60] Ibid., 95–96.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

By the second half of the 1970s, the need to redefine the agenda of women's emancipation to account for the multiple forms in which inequality persisted had become part of the mainstream discourse on women's condition under state socialism. This is best illustrated by a very popular collection of essays intended for girls and young women, *Cartea fetelor* (The book of girls), and most notably in the several chapters authored by Ecaterina Oproiu. Since the 1950s, Oproiu had become an established journalist, film critic, and dramaturg, prominent both in the press (as chief editor of *Cinema* and regular contributor to several newspapers and magazines) and on television (as presenter of "Telecinemateca"). In her work of fiction, Oproiu employed genres such as the interview or letters to give voice to a wide range of women's experiences, including domestic violence, manual labor in agriculture, and workplace discrimination.[61] Yet while she made a powerful statement for broadening the terms of the public debate on women's emancipation, her perspective in *Cartea fetelor* also illustrates contradictions that plagued the discourse on women's inequality more generally: Oproiu made a strong argument against elitism in the struggle for women's emancipation, yet reaffirmed the preeminence of class inequality over gender inequality; she explained the persistence of inequality in spite of the existence of a legal framework and top-down measures to ensure equality to be the consequence of prejudice among men and lack of courage among women; she detailed the triple responsibilities of women as workers, mothers, and citizens, but naturalized their central role within the family, as well as their reproductive and child rearing duties for

[61] Ecaterina Oproiu, *3x8 plus infinitul: dialoguri despre condiția femeii* [3x8 plus infinity: Dialogs about the condition of women] (Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1975). This is a fictional series of eight interviews with women of various professions, in which Oproiu uses the conventions of the genre to touch on topics rarely discussed from the perspective of women. Domestic violence, parental neglect, adultery, or divorce usually found a place in the "letters from the readers" or "agony aunt" sections of women's magazines, but in those cases, as well, it was not the original author who retained control over the way in which the experience was framed.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

the future of the nation; speaking against the idea that men should "help" women rather than share responsibilities with them, Oproiu put forward the idea of an "ideal father" which reinforced that of the "ideal mother" on which it was modelled.[62] These contradictions would only be aggravated by the increasing emphasis on motherhood and women's role in rationalizing the household in the 1980s.[63]

4. *Feminism, sexism, and the global*

Generally missing from the accounts of women's inequality discussed in the previous section is a systematic engagement with second wave feminism and the transnational debates on women's emancipation. The most substantial theoretical work to attempt this in state socialist Romania was Stana Buzatu's *The condition of women: Dimension of contemporary progress.* The 1979 published version of the PhD thesis she had defended at the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Academy, *The condition of women* is a 500-page sociological treatise, part mapping of contemporary Western feminism, part commentary on the global predicament of women, and part celebratory account of socialist policies—punctuated both by moments of national-communist feverishness and by sobering criticism of the limits of emancipation.

Feminism, held the widely shared perspective articulated by Ecaterina Oproiu in her introduction to the only work on women's emancipation by a contemporary Western European author published in full in Romanian, was a "bourgeois ideology" looking to expand the role of women within society, sustained by a movement plagued by sectarianism, women's self-isolation from the rest of the world, a reliance on women's

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[62] Oproiu, "Două întrebări-cheie."

[63] Denisa-Adriana Oprea, "Between the Heroine Mother and the Absent Woman: Motherhood and Womanhood in the Communist Magazine *Femeia*," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 23, no. 3 (2015): 290–96. 281–96

resources alone, and an undifferentiated opposition to men.[64] This was a simplistic view on a remarkably diverse and contradictory field of thought, argued Stana Buzatu, proposing that on certain issues Marxism and feminism were in fact open to "creative dialogue." Such was the notion of "sexism," a feminist term which described the concurrent discrimination on the basis of class and sex. To model its conceptual integration into the Romanian political language, Buzatu worked within the classical Marxist pronouncement that inequality was a social, rather than natural issue, a matter of class rather than of biological sex. Yet as observed by others as well, Buzatu too noted that changes in the system of class did not automatically translate into changes of the relation between sexes. As parallel hierarchies, under capitalism they put women in a position of double inferiority, which simultaneously implied that inequalities could and would be maintained under socialism if the problem of women's inequality was thought to be one of class alone. This line of reasoning allowed Buzatu to advocate for the reformation of dogmatic Marxism-Leninism and radical feminism in the same breath: "sexism" can be a concept used to bridge the gap between the subordination of the women's issue, by dogmatic Marxism-Leninism, to supposedly "more fundamental problems" on the one hand, and on the other hand feminism's lack of ideological and political coherence, and consequently of effective options for praxis.[65]

Buzatu modelled the conceptual integration of "sexism" to the socialist discourse on that of "racism." Why is it, she asked, that whereas the concept of racism was widely adopted by Marxist theory, the notion of sexism was treated with hostility or as an

[64] Ecaterina Oproiu, introduction to Mathilde Niel, *Drama eliberării femeii* [The drama of women's liberation] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1974), 7. There is no indication of how Oproiu chose to translate Niel's book, but it is possible that the point of connection was the Marxist–non-Marxist Humanist Dialogue in Herzeg Novi in August 1969, at which both Niel and her husband Andre Niel. The latter commented on the paper of Niculae Bellu and Alexandru Tănase discussed in chapter 1.

[65] Stana Buzatu, *Condiţia femeii, dimensiune a progresului contemporan* [Women's condition: A dimension of contemporary progress] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1979), 272.

excuse to qualify feminism as a bourgeois ideology? If not for the distortion of theory or intellectual inertia, she concluded, the reasons have to do with the structural conservatism of the political language and the naturalization of misogyny itself.[66] By further comparing the adoption of "sexism" as a working concept with that of "underdevelopment," meant to qualify the Marxist notion of social formations, Buzatu in effect turned the party's usual top-down strategy of conceptual change against itself. In the case of "underdevelopment," Nicolae Ceauşescu himself had conceded that the use of the concept was made necessary by the social realities of colonialism and imperialism. In a symmetrical argumentation, Buzatu suggested that by using "sexism" as a term for qualifying general notions such as "social relations," "modes of production," or "alienation," the opposite effect would be achieved—that of making overt the otherwise naturalized realities of discrimination against women: through the perpetuation of the "double and triple burden," their still highly unequal representation in higher education, the enduring gendering of professions, and women's very low representation in leadership positions— especially in the state apparatus.

Apart from conceptual innovation, Buzatu's *The condition of women* is also a good illustration of the transnational production and circulation of feminist discourse in late socialism. The contribution of state socialist women's organizations to the formulation of women's rights as human rights surrounding the 1975 International Women's Year has been the focus of historical reconstruction in the past years.[67] Even within hierarchies of epistemic power between the East and the West, the dynamic was not one of simple imposition by the West met with resistance from the East, but rather reflected shared interests negotiated from unequal positions. Along these lines, Raluca

[66] Ibid., 274–75.
[67] Celia Donert, "Women's Rights in Cold War Europe: Disentangling Feminist Histories," *Past & Present* 218 (2013): 180–202.

Maria Popa's study of the role of Romanian and Hungarian involvement in the organization of the International Women's Year sought to recover both the individual agency of feminist activists under socialism, as well as the institutional agency of communist women's organizations beyond their national contexts (such as the National Council of Women in Romania, of which Stana Buzatu was a bureau member). Popa argued that the transnationally produced discourse itself, however, particularly in the case of Romania, was poorly translated and integrated back into the national context—that is, either only piecemeal, through what she called "the nationalization" of transnationally framed global concerns, or not at all, by treating these concerns as "alien" or redundant to local circumstances.[68] In what follows I would like to engage more closely with this latter, epistemological claim, proposing that there is a need for analytical and hermeneutical tools to bridge the gap between accounts of international or transnational activism and intellectual histories of knowledge production.

In general, the works on women's inequality discussed in the previous section engaged rarely and superficially with concerns outside of the Romanian context. Stana Buzatu's *The condition of women*, however, was a rather unique attempt to map contemporary feminism from the position of the socialist semi-periphery, and in doing so reflected the complexities of the ongoing institutionalization of the topic of women's labor as one of global concern. Issues of women's labor, intellectual feminist discourse, power and ideology, and globalization and the "Third World" are entangled in *The condition of women*. Both the choice of themes and the literature referenced testify to Buzatu's participation in transnational networks of activism and knowledge production and

[68] Raluca Maria Popa, "Translating Equality between Women and Men across Cold War Divides: Women Activists from Hungary and Romania and the Creation of International Women's Year," in Shana Penn and Jill Massino, eds., *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 70–71.

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circulation. Most notably, from 1965 to 1971, Buzatu acted as secretary for the Women's International Democratic Federation in Berlin.[69]

I chose to discuss one particular case of intellectual coproduction and transfer of knowledge, the research symposium on "Women and decision making: a social policy priority," organized by the International Institute for Labor Studies in 1975, since Buzatu herself remembered it as a turning point in the development of her interest in the topic of feminism.[70] Established in Geneva in 1960 by the International Labor Office to promote a better understanding of labor conditions in all countries and provide leadership training in the field of social policy, the institute self-defined as an international research and education institution protected from all political pressures, which was to address issues "dispassionately and objectively."[71] Its main goal from the early 1970s onwards was to provide strategies to social policymakers, particularly with regard to developing countries. The symposium on decision-making organized in honor of the International Women's Year brought together around fifty participants to discuss the issues of "the traditional division of work between sexes, a source of inequality"; "women at work in the labor force and at home"; and "psychological, social, and political obstacles to decision making."[72] It is clear from the geographical distribution of papers presented, from Ghana to Hungary, India, the United States, and Brazil that

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[69] The Women's International Democratic Federation was, according to Francisca de Haan, the biggest postwar international women's organization. It initiated both the UN International Women's Year in 1975 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979. Francisca de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography of Transnational Women's Organisations: The Case of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF)," *Women's History Review* 19, no. 4 (2010): 548.

[70] Popa, "Translating Equality," 72. In Geneva, Buzatu met the French feminist Andrée Michel, who became her friend and later supplied her with books.

[71] Maryse Gaudier, "The International Institute for Labor Studies: Its Research Function, Activities, and Publications, 1960–2001," *ILO*, 2011, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/dgreports/inst/documents/genericdocument/wcms_192540.pdf.

[72] Françoise Latour da Veiga-Pinto, "A synthesis report: Research Symposium on Women and Decision Making, a Social Policy Priority" (Geneva: International Institute for Labor Studies, 1976).

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the goal was to frame the issue of women's participation in decision making as one of truly global significance, and to begin formulating standards, policy proposals, and instruments of intervention of equally global reach.

The symposium's working hypothesis, as formulated in the synthesis report, was that power, referring to the social relationships that govern the actions of both men and women, was wielded through organizations, and that decisions had greater impact if the organizations through which they were transmitted were formal rather than informal. This situation was shown to have emerged historically as a means of male domination under conditions of the division of labor between sexes and women's lack of autonomy outside the home because of their maternal functions. Denied access to political and economic power, women enmeshed in this structural web designed to serve a male-dominated society both reproduced and transformed the existing social relations based on the division of labor between sexes.[73] The element of contention, then, was the desired solution to the problem of women's domination put forward by the report—that is, the peaceful redistribution of power within formal organizations, meant to avoid dangerous social conflicts such as those provoked by the formation of parallel women's organizations capable of competing with those of men.

Stana Buzatu reacted to the Geneva symposium in *The condition of women*. She shared the thematic interest in issues of the traditional division of labor as a source of inequality, the issue of the double burden, or the cultural means of reinforcing woman's domination—for instance, she discussed at length the construction of femininity and sexuality, the "feminine mystique," or the image of women as consumers. However, Buzatu was particularly bothered by what she perceived as the replacement of class as

[73] Ibid., 2–3.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

an analytical category with the vague concept of power, which in her view concealed, rather than illuminated the structural roots of male domination.[74] One way of reading this argument would be to consider it a typical Marxist-Leninist framing of the ideological conflict between socialist emancipation and feminism as one between class versus nature in the explanation of women's inequality. However, moving beyond a framing of state socialism thinking about women's inequality from "the outside," I argue that Buzatu's argument should be understood within the logic of the institutional and epistemic setting that was attempting to produce the terms of a transnational, international discourse on the issue of women's limited participation in decision-making. In this way, Buzatu's intervention can be interpreted as a form of resistance against what she perceived as the "domestication" of radical social solutions in favor of petty institutional adjustments preferred because of their relative tolerance to being translated across societies as part of the process of consolidating an emerging global economic and political order.

5. *Conclusions*

To conclude, I return to the poem included in Pavel Câmpeanu's article about birth and death in Romania. Reflecting on the circumstances in which it was originally published in the student magazine *Amfiteatru*, Ana Blandiana maintained that it most probably appeared out of the editors' negligence rather than as a conscious provocation. She had submitted four poems, of which one was a list of mundane things that properly decoded spoke to the limitations of everyday life in Socialist Romania, and another concluded "I think we are a vegetal people; who ever saw a tree revolt?" Blandiana had explicitly told the editors the poems might not be publishable, and was surprised to see them in

[74] Buzatu, *Condiţia femeii*, 180n.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

print. Yet the fact that her case had gained notoriety abroad, with her poetry published in *The Independent*, for instance, and deciphered word for word by a Romanian editor from Voice of America, meant that she could continue publishing even after the ensuing scandal. She was banned again in 1988, however, for having written a children's book that featured Motanul Arpagic, a cat that parodied Nicolae Ceauşescu.[75]

As for "Children's Crusade," I include here the 1986 translation published in *The New York Review of Books* (left), and a 1991 translation more faithful to the original (right).

An entire people not yet on earth
Condemned to march along from birth
Fetuses from left to right
Devoid of hearing and of sight,
Fetuses on every hand
Who cannot even understand.
All march towards the tomb
Torn from some suffering mother's womb
Condemned to bear, condemned to die,
And not allowed to question why.

An entire people
still unborn,
but condemned to be born,
lined up before being born,
fetus by fetus,
an entire people
that cannot see, or hear, or
understand
but marches on
through the aching bodies of
women,
through the blood of the mothers
who are never asked.[76]

Whereas Câmpeanu's bluntest statements, as well as theoretical subtleties, were often smoothed over in the English translation,[77] the pathos of Blandiana's poem was notably amplified. The one came to stand for the Eastern European Marxist intellectual who documented the human costs of a political project to which he was believed to be central. The other was a woman artist whose life came to depend on the fragile balance between how critical and how visible her words were.

[75] Interview with Ana Blandiana by Naomi Frandzen (2003), *Lingua Romana*, 31 May 2016, http://linguaromana.byu.edu/2016/05/31/interview-ana-blandiana.
[76] Ana Blandiana, "The Children's Crusade," *The Iowa Reader* 21, no. 2 (1991): 41.
[77] Most notably, Câmpeanu implies that the demographic policies were a form of genocide against women, children, and the elderly. Câmpeanu, "Naşterea şi moartea," 277.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

The work of Blandiana and other prominent women who spoke against the communist regime in similar conditions, most notably Herta Müller and Doina Cornea, has been described as "genderless protest," emerging not from "a specific female experience, but from the consciousness of representing all (or at least most) citizens […]. Through oppositional and non-conformist activities, they acted as if men and women were indeed equal, not due to the achievements triggered by communism, but perhaps in spite of these."[78] Yet while the case of Ana Blandiana's poem shows that speaking "from a specific female experience" was indeed exceptional, this should not preclude an analysis of the ways in which not just oppositional activities, but also research and scholarship were profoundly gendered. It is against this backdrop that the study of how equality was performed would complement my analysis in this chapter of how it was debated.

The articulation of women's condition in terms of inequality required a good command of the possibilities to subvert the existing language on women's emancipation from within. It was creative, in that it resulted in the elaboration of new instruments of research for the study of social realities that had been made invisible by existing methodologies. It was polysemic, as shown in the case of the double burden, the core organizing concept in discussions of social inequality, the meaning of which shifted depending on the perspective from which it was analyzed (psychology, political economy, political participation, etc.). And, finally, it was bound contextually to the overarching idea that equality was premised on women's integration into the labor force. Qualitative research has shown that this created a framework within which gender roles could and at times had to be negotiated, even if this did not mean that they

[78] Cristina Petrescu, "A Genderless Protest: Women Confronting Romanian Communism," *Analele Universităţii Bucureşti. Ştiinţe politice* 16, no. 2 (2014): 81. 79–101.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

always were.[79] Similarly, it offered a vantage point from which feminist and transnational discourses on women's labor could be confronted with local realities.

[79] Jill Massiono, "Something Old, Something New: Marital Roles and Relations in State Socialist Romania," *Journal of Women's History* 22, no. 1 (2010): 34–60.

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Chapter 6. On Welfare:
Studies about the quality of life

For all its centrality in the legitimization of socialist modernization, the issue of welfare was only marginally a topic of research in the social sciences in Socialist Romania. Indeed, in the first section of this chapter I analyze how the issue of welfare was originally articulated in the field of future studies, in the second half of the 1960s. Romanian futurologists put forward generally optimistic views of future progress, yet as participants at the increasingly global debates on social development, and grappling with the powerful models elaborated by international think tanks throughout the 1970s, they also produced more nuanced accounts of the future from a Marxist humanist perspective, which defined “quality of life” not just as a distant goal but as an object of policy making. Beginning in the late 1970s, the issue of welfare was increasingly displaced by (democratic) participation and (individual) freedom, formulated in the language of mathematical modelling of complex systems and prognosis.

At the same time, Marxist-Leninist sociologists engaged in research of the socialist “way of life” within collaborative projects in the Eastern bloc in the second half of the 1970s attempted to integrate the issue of welfare into analyses of social structure and social stratification. In addition, speculating the qualitative turn at the end of the decade, they tried to reformulate it in the terms of subjective “quality of life.” The concept developed in an ambiguous relationship with the regime’s legitimization strategies in the 1980s and the technocratic aspirations of sociologists invested in steering social development. Yet it was also the result, as I discuss in the last section of the chapter, of the negotiation of the ideological, methodological, and theoretical possibilities of

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sociology by the new sociologists marginal in the Marxist-Leninist establishment under state socialism.

1. *Future studies*

In the second half of the 1960s, the mathematician and high-ranking cultural diplomat Mircea Maliţa held a regular column in the newspaper *Contemporanul*, entitled "Chronicle of the year 2000," in which he described aspects of everyday life in the future. The eponymous volume of collected articles enjoyed an even wider circulation: first published in 1969, it appeared in a second edition in 1971, and was translated into Czech, Polish, German, and English in preparation for the Third World Future Studies Conference held in Bucharest in 1972. His essays drew inspiration, according to Maliţa's own mapping of the field, from the rich and diverse literature on the future emerging in the 1960s on both sides of the Iron Curtain. This covered the entire spectrum of scientific prognosis, his source of inspiration being the Vienna-born astrophysicist Erich Jantsch, one of the six founding members of the Club of Rome; science fiction, especially the works of Iva Efremov, Isaac Asimov, Fred Hoyle, and Arthur C. Clarke; and a host of Soviet, American, and French authors, as well as several international research programs devoted to the scientific study of the future.[1]

The emergence of the future as a field of global contestation in the 1960s and 1970s has been amply documented in recent historiography, with the work of authors from East Central Europe and the Soviet Union shown to have been constitutive to the field in complex ways which included the circulation of knowledge and expertise, collaboration in institutional settings that bridged the East–West divide, as well as appropriation and

[1] Mircea Maliţa, *Cronica anului 2000* [Chronicle of the year 2000] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1969), 271–76.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

creative contestation.[2] Drawing on this painstaking work of reconstruction, I aim to relocate the work of Romanian futurologists within the broader debates on social development in the 1970s and 1980s Romania, with an emphasis on how the issues of welfare, well-being, or "quality of life" were formulated from the perspective of future studies.

In his essays, Maliţa offered a generally optimistic view of future technological advances, with a focus on the use of computers as instruments to assist and enhance human thinking. He also nvisaged the increasing use of mathematics as a tool of modelling, from the field of economics to that of social life; and postulated that the problem of communication will be solved, with "no person left outside the web of social information." He concluded that these changes will lead to an increase in rationality, to the conquering of nature and the liberation of man by way of automatization, and to the alleviation of social conflicts and inequalities. Overall, Maliţa's perspective was one of undeterred progress and future welfare, in which socialism played a central role:

> In our century speculations about the future are no longer vain exercises. Socialism is the first future-oriented order, based on science and the firm belief that man can master his own destiny in the same way he can tame nature. It [socialism] became the key to changing the relations of oppression and domination into relations of brotherhood and cooperation. It also offered the solution for a fast transformation from the stage of societal lagging behind to high levels of civilization and culture.[3]

As Minister of Education in 1970–72, Maliţa was closely involved in the institutionalization and internationalization of prognosis and future studies in Romania. In 1970, he established the Laboratory for Prospective Studies at the University of

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[2] For a global mapping of the field of future studies, see Jenny Andersson and Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, eds., *The Struggle for the Long-Term in Transnational Science and Politics: Forging the Future* (New York: Routledge, 2015).
[3] Ibid., 280.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Bucharest, led by the mathematician Mihai Botez (b. 1940), who had previously worked as a researcher and in 1967–70 as head of the department for mathematical applications in the organization and management of enterprises at the UN-funded Center for the Training of Enterprise Cadres CEPECA.[4] In his 1971 *Introduction to forecasting,* Botez echoed Maliţa's approach to the field, arguing that the complexity and the accelerated rhythm of change had rendered "prospective studies" central to modern life. Defined, following Gaston Berger, as the systematic investigation of the future with scientific methods, for the organization of the present, prospective research was not a science based on experiments. Rather, starting from the analysis of a given system and using data from the past, it produced a series of alternative possible futures, or models of future states of the system, resulting in a critical "prospective attitude" towards the present and its reorganization on the basis of algorithms of behavior and dynamic adaptation.[5] This perspective also resonated with ongoing discussions among Marxist humanist philosophers on the "creative character" of Marxism.

The most systematic attempt to integrate humanist Marxism and future studies in the 1970s was formulated by the philosopher Pavel Apostol, whose own path to futurology illustrates the intellectual sources for the rapprochement marked by the Third World Future Studies Conference held in 1972 in Bucharest, on the topic of the "Common Future of Mankind." Apostol received his PhD in philosophy in 1948, under the supervision of Lucian Blaga and Alexandru Roşca, with a dissertation on dialectical

[4] Ana-Maria Cătănuş, "Official and Unofficial Futures of the Communist System: Romanian Futures Studies between Control and Dissidence," in Jenny Andersson and Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, eds., *The Struggle for the Long-Term in Transnational Science and Politics: Forging the Future* (New York: Routledge, 2015). On the broader context for the establishment of CEPECA and similar institutions in the Eastern bloc, see Sandrine Kott, "The Social Engineering Project: Exportation of Capitalist Management Culture to Eastern Europe (1950–1980)," in Michel Christian, Sandrine Kott, and Ondrej Matejka, eds., *Planning in Cold War Europe: Competition, Cooperation, Circulations (1950s–1970s)* (Berlin, Boston : De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2018), 123–42.

[5] Mihai Botez, *Introducere în prospectivă* [Introduction to forecasting] (Bucharest: Centrul de Informare şi Documentare în Ştiinţele Sociale şi Politice, 1971).

materialism and the "problem of man." In 1968, Tudor Bugnariu translated it in the language of humanist Marxism as a work of "philosophical anthropology" focused on practical action and knowledge as essential to the human condition.[6] He was writing in favor of the full recognition of Apostol's degree in the context of the political rehabilitation campaign initiated by Ceauşescu to correct the "excesses" of the Gheorghiu-Dej regime. Arrested in 1952, Apostol had been accused for his interwar membership in two Zionist youth organizations, his nationalist stance as a journalist in the immediate postwar period, as well as his support of fascist and bourgeois intellectuals from his leadership positions at the Faculties of Philosophy and History at the Babeş University in Cluj after 1948. As with other show trials, Apostol admitted to the accusations and engaged in self-criticism, but was ultimately unable to plead his case.[7]

After his release from prison in 1955, he worked as a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy in Bucharest, publishing a two-volume study on Hegel's dialectical logic. In the 1960s, he became interested in cybernetics via the epistemology of science and pedagogy, and published his first work of futurology, a collection of essays on the condition of man in the year 2000, at the beginning of the 1970s. Around the same time, he attempted to carve a common ground between Marxist and non-Marxist perspectives on the future. In an article translated into Italian, German, and English, Apostol argued that the work of Marx, and in particular his vision of social development, had been simplified by dogmatic Marxism as well as superficial bourgeois criticism to the point of postulating a deterministic, linear view of historical change. Apostol maintained that

[6] CNSAS, file D 019, vol. 5, Tudor Bugnariu, "Referat pentru recunoaşterea titlului de doctor, obţinut de tovarăşul Apostol în anul 1948" [Report for the recognition of the PhD title obtained by comrade Pavel Apostol in 1948]
[7] CNSAS, file P 013078 (Pavel Apostol), vol. I.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

a clarification of the Marxist structure of the future was made all the more necessary in the context of the "unstable equilibrium" of what he called "the three great partial systems of our contemporary world." It was their interdependence that future studies would need to account for moving forward, rather than speak only to the interest of one's own system:

> By eliminating from the field of investigation the future interactions between the three partial systems—capitalist, socialist, developing—any future study becomes an apology for the *status quo*; it becomes an establishment futuristics in the sense of institutionalizing the given power relations and thus contributes to the maintenance of the present inequality of opportunity.[8]

Apostol thus circumvented the usual point of contention between Marxist and non-Marxist futurologists—whether it was "the future" or "possible futures" that represented their object of study.

Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's analysis of Marxist dialectics, he further argued that for Marx "the dialectical process is not a linear one but always includes a definite field of possible syntheses with several degrees of probability, depending on conditions."[9] Importantly, this "probabilistic determinism" (as opposed to the "mechanical determinism" assumed by dogmatic Marxism) was led by human action and proceeded towards human-set goals, which explained the existence of different national roads to socialism, as well as multiple possibilities for development within national communities, nevertheless connected by a common structure. This structure aimed at the stability and reproduction of the system while ensuring the freedom of each individual within it, and to this end permanently updated its development strategy and goals. From this perspective, ideology was always at the core of futurology, in the sense

[8] Pavel Apostol, "Marxism and the Structure of the Future," *Futures* (September 1972): 203.
[9] Ibid., 204.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

that models of the future did not so much predict events independent of human action, but rather the possible consequences of human actions.

Apostol concluded with the belief that there was sufficient common ground emerging in the field of future studies to "make possible a cooperation based on mutual criticism between Marxist and non-Marxist scientists": the ethical concern for the human and social significance of projected futures, social responsibility in the sense of pursuing a "prospective (future oriented) humanism," acceptance of the fact that ideological and political neutrality was not possible, a shared concern for the low operational value of future research, and the interest in exploring not isolated systems but "the common destiny of man in his pluralistic social organizations."[10]

As chair of the organizing committee for the Third World Future Studies Conference, Apostol reflected in his closing report on the steps taken towards the realization of such a common platform. He emphasized the marked orientation of future studies towards interdisciplinarity, the integration of research and action, and finally the call for the democratization of future studies against both conservative resistance and technocratic depersonalization, through the institutionalization of public opinion controls on expert science.[11] As Jim Dator passionately argued at the final plenary session, true citizen participation had been either purposely or unconsciously neglected in future studies: "In fact, while some 'futurists' appear to the public to be little more than quasi-religious astrological freaks, most—at least many of the ones who show up at futures research conferences—seem to be bureaucratic powerbrokers who apparently want to gain control over the future before 'the enemy' does." To that he opposed a vision of future

[10] Ibid., 208–209.
[11] Pavel Apostol, "Raportul prezentat de directorul executive al conferinței" [Report of the executive director of the conference], in Mihai Botez and Mircea Ioanid, eds., *Viitorul comun al oamenilor* [The common future of mankind] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1976), 431-36.

research that would "incorporate ordinary people with their dreams, hopes, and fears into its daily work, and try honestly to deal realistically—but neither patronizingly nor manipulatively—with them."[12]

These points were also reflected in the "Bucharest Declaration" adopted at the conference, which prefaced the establishing of the World Futures Studies Federation a year later. The federation was to promote a humanist, global, and conscious politics; support and encourage alternative programs that identified the future wished by the people who are the subject of planning; and acknowledge that two thirds of the world required "alternative futures," not necessarily based on the Western notions of progress.[13] What has been analyzed as the globalization of the field of future studies in the 1970s, "shifting its perspective from a West–East and technology-driven slant towards a global and human-centered one,"[14] was also theorized by the futurologists themselves. More importantly, it built back into local debates on development.

Pavel Apostol wrote extensively about a new stage in future studies, as inaugurated by the Bucharest Declaration, arguing that at the core of this shift was the pursuit of qualitative change. Invited to participate at the debate initiated by Miron Constantinescu at the Laboratory of Sociology on social development, Apostol reported on the ongoing discussions about the use of objective and subjective indicators in the operationalization of "quality of life" both within the World Futures Federation and within international development projects, such as the social indicators model elaborated by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development. The

[12] Jim Dator, "Futures Research: A Second Look, and Yet Another Look Again," http://www.futures.hawaii.edu/publications/futures-studies/FutureResearch2ndLook1972.pdf.
[13] "Declaraţia celei de-a III-a Conferinţe mondiale de cercetare a viitorului (Declaraţia de la Bucureşti)" [Statement of the Third World Future Research Conference (Bucharest Declaration)], in Botez and Ioanid, eds., *Viitorul comun*, 428–30.
[14] Elke Seefried, "Globalized Science: The 1970s Futures Field," *Centaurus* 59, nos. 1–2 (2017): 40.

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latter's expert commission, he explained, refused to include subjective indicators because that would have meant accounting for "the element of class judgement." Meanwhile, the working group on the quality of life which met at the Fourth World Future Studies Conference in Rome had almost unanimously accepted the proposal put forward by the physics Nobel-prize laurate Dennis Gabor and himself to also include subjective quality of life indicators in models of social prognosis.

In response to comments from Haralamb Culea pointing to the difficulty of quantifying the quality of life, Apostol on the one hand argued against a relativistic, subjective perspective that would hamper the fulfillment of people's "basic needs," and on the other hand clarified the intellectual roots of the interest in the "quality of life":

> I am convinced that it is not the "consumption society" which raised the issue of quality of life, but Karl Marx and Fr. Engels when they studied capitalist industrial society and showed that although it represents a huge economic progress, the quality of life this society offers to those who work is not satisfactory. For a century, economists criticized Marx for introducing moral, humanist criteria into political economy which are supposedly extra-scientific. One hundred years later, the same bourgeois economists work with social indicators, because they represent the true measure of economic progress.[15]

Apostol argued, however, that while planning for the quality of life should be the main aim of social development, it should not be limited to projecting into the future the existing structure of social indicators, but should ensure the future freedom to choose and prioritize the indicators for the people themselves. Echoing his analysis of the Marxist structure of the future, Apostol maintained that the study of quality of life should in fact be a study of the structure that could guarantee such freedom for members of a future society.[16]

[15] "Dezbaterea comunicării 'Probleme actuale ale prognozei sociale—calitatea vieţii şi indicatorii sociali" [Debate on the presentation 'Current problems of social prognosis: Quality of life and social indicators], *Caiete de studii, referate şi dezbateri*, no. 14 (1973): 23–24.

[16] Pavel Apostol, *Calitatea vieţii şi explorarea viitorului* [Quality of life and the exploration of the future] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1975), 197–203.

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In the second half of the 1970s, Apostol elaborated a comprehensive approach to the future which synthesized the anthropological assumptions of Marxist humanism, a dialectical methodology for the study of the future, and a critical approach to global modelling. Drawing on criticism stemming from socialist and Third World countries of the global developmental models elaborated in the 1970s, and especially *Limits to Growth*,[17] Apostol projected the central role of "education for the future" in enabling both individuals and communities "to master the social technology of creating and governing free societies, free people who have the social minimum necessary guaranteed for the non-manipulated satisfaction of their fundamental needs and the free choice of their quality of life."[18]

"Future research, in the East bloc," argued Jenny Andersson about the role of futurology under state socialism, "was shaped on a plane between the two poles of tight regime control and dissent." Whereas in the international networks in which they were embedded the work of socialist futurologists "could be anchored in a long historical humanistic heritage," Andersson contended, "in their own contexts, socialist future research existed in a space squarely defined by Marxism Leninism and its prescription of the future as a singular and law-driven entity."[19] The case of Pavel Apostol illustrates that this tension was in fact actively negotiated, resulting in the formulation of a Marxist humanist approach to the future that sought to integrate global and local approaches to

[17] In 1979, the Club of Rome published a report co-authored by social scientists from capitalist, socialist, and developing countries which aimed to shift focus from the material constraints to development (the subject of *Limits to Growth*) to the role of societal learning and action in mediating such constraints, proposing the development of "anticipatory and participatory learning." See James W. Botkin, Mahdi Elmandja, and Mircea Maliţa, *No Limits to Learning: Bridging the Human Gap* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1979).
[18] Pavel Apostol, *Viitorul* [The future] (Bucharest: Editura ştiinţifică şi enciclopedică, 1977), 319.
[19] Jenny Andersson, *The Future of the World: Futurology, Futurists, and the Struggle for the Post–Cold War Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 126. For the case of Botez, see the chapter "Future Studies as Dissidence: Mihai Botes and the Center for Methodological Future Research in Bucharest," 146–51.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

social development in the 1970s. By the end of the decade, as conditions for research in the social sciences worsened locally, continued access to the international future studies networks, even while the field itself was in decline, allowed for the articulation of more critical models. The case of Mihai Botez, who positioned himself as one of the most prominent Romanian dissidents in the 1980s, goes to show that what Andersson described as the plane between the two poles of tight regime control and dissidence in effect also cut across the space of transnational debate that East European futurologists had participated at carving up in 1970s.

Botez published extensively on methodological issues of prognosis, including the first textbook on the topic,[20] and in 1974 became director of the International Center for the Methodology of Future and Development Studies, set up by the World Future Studies Federation at the University of Bucharest. He envisaged the center's methodological research as closely integrated to the country's development strategy, while at the same time contributing to the growing international exchange in the field of future science.[21] A good example was the methodology of open multi-modelling applied to the collective design of social systems: drawing on criticism of traditional modelling, as increasingly formulated in the wake of the publication of *Limits to Growth*, it argued for the need to account for the perspective of different observers, different model creators, and different rhetorical rules of modelling.[22] This represented an ingenious methodological solution to the issue of participatory, collective, and democratic projection preoccupying the field of future studies more broadly. As Botez explained in response

[20] Mihai Botez, ed., *Curs de prognoză* [Prognosis course] (Bucharest: Centrul de Informare şi Documentare în Ştiinţele Sociale şi Politice, 1972).
[21] Mihai Botez, "Efervescenţă creatoare în domeniul ideilor prospective" [Creative effervescence in the field of prospective ideas], *Revista economică*, no. 10 (1974): 18–20.
[22] Mihai Botez, "Câteva obervaţii asupra interacţiei om-societate: O aplicaţie a metodologiei multimodelării deschise la proiectarea colectivă a sistemelor sociale" [Some observations about the human-system interaction: An application of the methodology of open multi-modelling to the collective design of social systems], *Caiete de studii, referate şi dezbateri*, no. 4 (1974): 12–13.

to several questions from the audience following a presentation of the model at the Laboratory for Sociology, in practice it had been operationalized for an analysis of the management of water reserves at the national level.[23]

The mismatch between the theoretical and methodological aspirations of future studies and the requirements of planning and economic development were clear from the beginning. During an official meeting between John Galtung and Nicolae Ceaușescu arranged by Mircea Malița in 1974, in which the two discussed the establishment of the International Center for the Methodology of Future and Development Studies, Ceaușescu explained his position:

> With regard to the social sciences, they have an important role because they offer the possibility to better understand the phenomena and laws of social development, to orient the path of future development. We see social sciences not as a goal in themselves, but as a means to understand the course of societal development. I think one of the mistakes that developing countries make—to a certain extent directed by developed countries—is to prioritize the development of social sciences (law, political economy, philosophy, etc.) and not the scientific branches needed for the use of national resources. In fact, this is also a form of colonialism and neocolonialism.[24]

In the second half of the 1970s, the institutional support for future studies and systems analysis was reduced to a minimum, yet Botez remained closely connected to international scientific networks, and was hired at the Centre démografique ONU-Roumanie (CEDOR) after losing his job at the University of Bucharest in 1979. Botez embarked on the path of what he described as "solitary dissidence"—that is, "open opposition from within the communist regime"[25]— criticizing the economic

[23] Ibid., 37.

[24] Ana-Maria Cătănuș, "Ceaușescu și studiile viitorului în România, I: Johan Galtung la București, 1974" [Ceaușescu and future studies in Romania, I: Johan Galtung in Bucharest, 1974], *Arhivele Totalitarianismului*, nos. 1–2 (2017): 261.

[25] Mihai Botez, "Postfață: După cinci ani" [Afterword: Five years later], in *Românii despre ei înșiși: O încercare de comunismologie prospectivă* [Romanians about themselves: An attempt at a prospective communismology] (Bucharest: Editura Litera, 1992), 81.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

development strategy pursued by the party through memorandums,[26] and via Radio Free Europe.[27] In the early 1980s, Botez and his wife, Mariana Celac, also continued the theoretical and methodological work on modelling started in the 1970s, within the project "Goals, processes, and indicators of development" at the United Nations University. They formulated a comprehensive critique of global models, proposing the pursuit of "participative global modelling" instead,[28] an argument that they later developed into a discussion of desirable and undesirable futures. Botez and Celac projected an ideal "beta society"—horizontally integrated, based on participation and individual freedom—which they contrasted to all existing "alpha societies" and "industrialized class dictatorship" (i.e., state socialism) in particular. The latter was described as vertically integrated, growth-oriented, prone to sacrifice individual freedom in the name of equality, and investing in the image of a future, desired communist society over "the rules of societal dialogue that are supposed to generate the image that will be perceived as desirable."[29]

For all the insistence on democratic participation, dialogue, and collective design of desirable futures, Botez was working with a partial understanding of the changes in the social structure of the socialist society. In the mid-1980s, he carried out covert interviews on people's ideas about the future, compiling his findings in a study of "prospective communismology" which was broadcast by Radio Free Europe in 1987–

[26] Botez's dissident activities and critical writings are analyzed in detail in Ana-Maria Cătănuş, "Breaking the Barriers of Romanian Conformism. Dissent and Scientific Critique of Communism in Mathematician Mihai Botez's Thinking," *History of Communism in Europe*, no. 2 (2011): 345–68; and Cătănuş, "Official and Unofficial Futures."

[27] For an account of his contacts with Radio Free Europe over the period of almost a decade, see Radu Ioanid, "Mihai Botez şi Europa Liberă" [Mihai Botez and Radio Free Europe], in *Mihai Botez: Trei schiţe de portret* [Mihai Botez: Three portrait sketches] (Iaşi: Polirom, 2018), 57–73.

[28] Mihai Botez and Mariana Celac, "Globel Modelling… Without Models? Theory, Methodology, and Rhetoric in World Modelling," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 23 (1983): 121–60.

[29] Mihai Botez and Mariana Celac, "Undesirable versus Desirable Societies," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 30 (1986): 276.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

89, after he had emigrated to the United States, and was only published in 1992. In terms of social conditions, Botez articulated the issue of "quality of life" both as a consequence of the disastrous economic policy of industrial development, and as possible source of social protest. Yet in his interpretation of public opinion, he professed having been taken by surprise by the fact that the real discontinuity had not been 1945, but 1965, as a result of industrialization and urbanization.

His portrait of the "average Romanian" of the mid-1980s best illustrates the discrepancy between the sophisticated theoretical approach to modelling social development and political critique and the tone-deaf approach to social issues: "The average Romanian is born in the countryside but moved to the city, lives in a 'panel building' and works in the factory. To this one must add that, generally, he reckons this trajectory is a 'progress' and his story—a 'story of success.'" Botez speculated that if people's satisfaction would be recorded, the values would be much higher than what "an outside observer of the profound Romanian crisis imagines."[30] He explained this as a result of efficient propaganda, especially among the "simple people," impressionable in spite of the realities of their low quality of life, biased in their evaluations by their personal experience of upper mobility, and afflicted by historical short-sightedness:

> The average Romanian no longer perceives Romania of the year 1985 as a perturbation, as an anomaly of the Romania of the year 1938 (normal), which he didn't even know; and he does not have the reference of a hypothetical democratic Romania, pluralistic and industrialized, which he cannot imagine. He compares it with the Romania of 1965, and compared to that moment, he often feels he is part of progress.[31]

In sketching this portrait, Botez also drew on the expertise of unnamed sociologists, reflecting the shift in sociological perspectives on welfare occasioned by the "qualitative turn" at the turn of the 1970s, specifically the contradiction inherent in the

[30] Botez, *Românii despre ei înşişi*, 55.
[31] Ibid., 56.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

project of recovering subjective experience while reaffirming a vision of the technocratic management of the social.

2. *From "way of life" to "quality of life"*

Sociological research into everyday life had been developing across the Eastern bloc beginning in the 1970s, with the goal of theorizing the emergence of a specifically socialist "way of life." As an elaboration on studies of the class structure of the socialist society, it integrated both the study of standards of living as recorded by economic statistics (or, rather, "level of living" as it was called in an attempt to avoid normative assumptions) and the developing interest in the subjective experience of life satisfaction—subsumed in non-Marxist research to the analysis of "quality of life." The terms "standard/level of living," "quality of life," "way of life," and "lifestyle" were not easily disentangled. Their configuration, moreover, depended both on local traditions of sociological research and on the type of participation in regional and international research structures.

A good case in point was the methodology of time budgets developed in the second half of the 1960s by the sociologist Alexander Szalai, who coordinated a twelve-country international comparative study at the European Centre for the Coordination of Research and Documentation in the Social Sciences.[32] This informed a strand of mathematized, quantitative research of the socialist "way of life" into the second half of the 1970s. As argued by Rudolf Andorka and Béla Falussy, it was the increase in people's standard of living, or material conditions for the satisfaction of their needs which prompted comparative time budged studies: with basic necessities covered, it

[32] Alexander Szalai, *The Use of Time: Daily Activities of Urban and Suburban Populations in Twelve Countries* (Paris: Mouton, 1972).

had become important to know what people do, specifically, with their surplus money and time.[33] In Poland, partly drawing on the "humanist" sociological tradition of Florian Znaniecki, the qualitative research of "lifestyles" was developed already in the early 1970s. By the mid-1970s, as Hungarian, Polish, Czech, and Soviet researchers met in Budapest for conference on the socialist way of life (*életmód*), qualitative, theory-building approaches were gaining ground, and large-scale research projects based on extensive biographical interviews were conducted in both Hungary and Poland in the second half of the decade.[34]

Romanian sociologists took up the issue of the socialist "way of life" in the second half of the 1970s, as part of a research into the growth of the working class under socialism coordinated by Constantin Ionescu and Oscar Hoffman at the Center for Sociological Studies. Argentina Firuţă's work over the 1976–78 period offers a comprehensive illustration of the stages through which aspects of everyday life were integrated into social structure research. Mapping the existing literature on the topic in the research report she submitted to the Academy of Social and Political Sciences in 1976, Firuţă argued that the concept of "quality of life" had been developed as a reaction to the crisis of the capitalist "consumption society"; as a possible solution to the increasing deterioration of the environment; as a response to the threat of demands for equality stemming from the third world; and finally as an ideological strategy to divert the attention of the public opinion in developed capitalist countries from the grave problems of economic crisis, unemployment, and inflation. Its aim had supposedly been

[33] Rudolf Andorka and Béla Falussy, "The Way of Life of the Hungarian Society on the Basis of the Time Budget Survey of 1976–1977," *Social Indicators Research* 11, no. 1 (1982): 31–73.

[34] For a detailed comparative analysis, see Piotr Filipkowski, Judit Gárdos, Éva Kovács, and Vera Szabari, "Culture over Structure: The Heritage of Lifestyle Research in the 1970s in Hungary and Poland," *Stan Rzeczy* 13 (2017):147–70.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

to accustom the masses with "objectivist" explanations for the coming decline, especially the theory of the demographic and environmental "limits to growth."[35]

Firuţă immediately followed this rare catalogue of ideological refutations with an account of the growing global concern for quality of life in terms of the harmonious, peaceful, and free development of humanity, as reflected in the fields of future studies, prognosis and modelling, as well as sociology. Finally, Firuţă articulated "way of life" as a conceptual alternative drawing on contemporary Marxist sociology, especially from Czechoslovakia, postulating its role in the analysis, prognosis, and planning of the way of life of particular social groups. Firuţă operationalized the concept of way of life for the empirical study conducted among almost 3000 workers in 1976 in terms of activities for the satisfaction of material needs, socio-political manifestation, and cultural development. This resulted in a differentiated portrait of the working class along the lines of professional qualification, length of employment in the workplace, and age, which highlighted especially the inequality between urban workers and workers of rural background or who commuted from rural areas, in terms of political participation, social integration in the workplace, and cultural consumption. Firuţă summarized the results of her research at the 1977 Warsaw meeting of the "Socialist way of life" working group established within the "Evolution of the social structure of socialist society" research commission.[36] Only philosophers had participated from Romania at the working group in the previous years, and Firuţă noted the predominantly theoretical and methodological discussions among socialist social scientists.[37] Yet in

[35] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 25/1976, Argentina Firuţă, "Aspecte ale modului de viaţă al clasei muncitoare" [Aspects of the working-class way of life], 163–64.
[36] ANR, ASSP—Sociologie, file 8/1977.
[37] Argentina Firuţă, "Întâlnirea grupei de lucru 'Modul de viaţă socialist,' Varşovia, 1977" [Meeting of the working group "The socialist way of life," Warsaw, 1977], *Viitorul social* 6, no. 3 (1977): 575–76.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

the wake of the meeting, she reformulated her approach to the study of workers' way of life on at least two accounts.

First, with reference to the typology of the working class presented by the Polish sociologist Stanisław Widerszpil, who published on issues of class structure, stratification, and inequality, Firuţă proposed a typology of the working class which accounted for the condition of the urban-rural worker, a transitory way of life characteristic either to commuters or to workers of rural background who had moved to the city. Based on data collected on how workers spent their free time (TV, reading, movies, theater, visiting friends, museums, sports, walks) and their holidays, Firuţă focused in particular on the inequalities in terms of the time available and the accessibility of these activities for the three categories of workers. However, she concluded, in line with the broader theme of the research project conducted at the Center for Sociological Research on the homogenization of the working class, that workers who were transitioning from rural to urban areas tended to approximate the way of life of the urban workers.

Second, following the Warsaw meeting Firuţă rearticulated her theoretical model in systemic terms, as "the complex and dynamic unity of the dimensions of existence and consciousness of an individual, class, social group, or society, objectified in the development of human personality."[38] Way of life was in this perspective described not by a series of indicators, but as the interdependence between class structure, standard of living, lifestyle, and the personality structure of the individual. The inspiration was most probably the theoretical approach to the socialist way of life developed by Blanka

[38] Argentina Firuţă, "Schimbări în modul de viaţă al clasei muncitoare" [Changes in the way of life of the working class], *Viitorul social* 7, no. 1 (1978): 72.

Filipcová and her research team in Prague, which Firuţă reviewed admiringly,[39] and which stroke a similar balance between grand theorization of the ideological tenets of Marxism-Leninism, empirical research, and interventionist ethos to the research on social homogenization carried out at the Center for Sociological Research.[40]

As the 12th Party Congress adopted a "Program for the increase in living standards and the quality of life" for the 1981–1985 five-year plan in 1979, the otherwise marginal sociological research on everyday life got a new lease on life. The choice of words, which proved ever more ironic as the standard of living plummeted in the 1980s, nevertheless occasioned the development of a new niche of sociological research, the elaboration of a model for surveying society which will remain in use for decades, and the last empirical survey of everyday life conducted in Socialist Romania, all before the five-year plan was over. The central figure in the emergence of quality of life research was Cătălin Zamfir. In the second half of the 1960s, Zamfir obtained his PhD in Philosophy with a dissertation on the sociological and psychological aspects of organization and management. During a brief stint at the Institute of Psychology, he participated at the monographic research on industrialization coordinated by Herseni in the second half of the 1960s. Zamfir attempted to join the sociology department at the University of Bucharest, was not supported by Miron Constantinescu, and so he returned as assistant at the Faculty of Philosophy at Bugnariu's invitation. After publishing his dissertation, Zamfir received a Ford scholarship to specialize in the field of industrial sociology at the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, for the 1973–74 academic year. This is also where he became familiar with the latest

[39] Argentina Firuţă, "Cercetarea sociologică a modului de viaţă socialist în dezbaterea sociologilor cehoslovaci" [Sociological research of the socialist way of life debated by Czechoslovak sociologists], *Viitorul social* 6, no. 2 (1977): 390–400.

[40] On way of life research in Czechoslovakia, see Michal Kopeček, "From Scientific Social Management to Neoliberal Governmentality?: Czechoslovak Sociology and Social Research on the Way from Authoritarianism to Liberal Democracy, 1969–1989," *Stan Rzeczy* 13 (2017): 182–88.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

research in the field of social indicators, especially the methodologies developed at the institute for measuring satisfaction and subjective perception. Upon his return, Zamfir conducted research and published on the social development ("humanization") of enterprises, and beginning in 1979 he brought together a loosely knit informal group of sociologists interested in the topic of quality of life, who published together several edited volumes in the 1980s.

The first collection of studies on everyday life, comprising translations from Eastern bloc, South American, and contemporary American sociology, was compiled for a closed circuit of experts at the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Academy in 1980. The interest in quality of life, commented Zamfir and Nicolae Lotreanu as editors in the introduction to the volume, had been the result of the crisis of developed capitalist societies, and particularly the disillusionment with the "spontaneous social mechanisms" thought to produce welfare along with economic growth. The crisis had been three-fold: environmental, with increasing attention paid to the depletion of natural resources and the degradation of the environment; social, with the realization that economic growth tended to maintain economic inequalities rather than alleviate poverty in developed societies; and human, in as much as economic growth was shown to have a reduced positive impact on life satisfaction, and past a certain level of growth even a negative impact. From this critical standpoint, Zamfir and Lotreanu defined the concept of quality of life as "the value of one's life for oneself," thus articulating the issue of human subjectivity at its core.[41]

This framing of the topic of quality of life drew particularly on 1970s debates on the issues of development, the "post-industrial society," and the "limits to growth." In

[41] Cătălin Zamfir and Nicolae Lotreanu, "Cuvânt introductiv" [Introduction], *Caiet documentar Academia "Ştefan Gheorghiu,"* no. 2 (1980): v–viii.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

addition, it relied on criticism coming from the Global South of the prevailing development models, with the volume including an analysis of the Latin American World Model (Barlioche) which argued for the incorporation of "human goals" and the quality of life into global models. A second cluster of sources was the literature on "alternative lifestyles," and Johan Galtung's approach to human-centered development in particular. Finally, the conceptual distinction between "way of life" and lifestyle, which Zamfir and the researchers publishing on everyday life maintained in the 1980s, distinguishing their work from Marxist-Leninist sociology as pursued in the 1970s, was inspired by the Polish qualitative sociology of Andrzej Sicinski. As Sicinski formulated the epistemological shift in everyday life research in 1978: whereas the "way of life" research aspired at an exhaustive description of human behavior (work, consumption, leisure, etc.), including behavior which was determined or imposed, looked for commonalities across communities, and privileged the study of economic factors, the object of lifestyle research were individual configurations of behavior (presupposing the possibility of choice), differences within the same community, cultural phenomena rather than economic determinations, and the interactions between behavior, motivation, needs, values, etc.[42]

Following the publication of the volume of collected essays on the quality of life, Zamfir was coopted by Ion Rebedeu, a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy, to participate at the meetings of the "Way of life" working group and develop theoretically the issues of way of life and quality of life. Zamfir and Rebedeu framed the latter as a fundamental shift in the development strategy adopted by the party for the first half of the 1980s, from economic growth to social development. They projected that the quality

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[42] Andrzej Sicinski, "'Stilul de viaţă' şi 'Modul de viaţă'" ["Lifestyle" and "way of life"], *Caiet documentar Academia "Ştefan Gheorghiu,"* no. 2 (1980): 3–9.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

of life would evolve by the year 2000 in the direction of realizing the principle of equality among people, promoting rational, non-wasteful consumption, and focusing on non-economic resources for the increase of the quality of life, such as nature, art, sports, education, family, friendships, social participation, or the humanization of work. An extended discussion of how to prevent the emergence of "consumerist tendencies" over the next decades of increase in the quality of life illustrated well how this focus on "non-economic resources," while it certainly stemmed from a qualitative, "human-centered" approach to social life, was also remarkably well suited not just to justify, but directly inform austerity measures. Anti-consumerist tendencies, suggested Zamfir and Rebedeu, could be stimulated through economic constraints, promoting rational consumption, the influence of anti-consumerist cultural patterns emerging from developed countries, promoting equality and social homogenization (against consumption as a component of social status), but also the crystallization of alternative lifestyles (with their specific consumption patterns), and finally, maintaining an open and participative social organization to avoid the compensatory consumption resulting from alienation in capitalist societies.[43]

The ambiguity between legitimization and subversion in the approach to quality of life as a core element of the development strategy set out by the party also translated to the level of the research instruments developed, simultaneously envisaged as tools of intervention. In 1980, Zamfir coordinated a small group of researchers from the Institute of Philosophy and the Center for Sociological Research to elaborate a comprehensive set of indicators for measuring the subjective quality of life, adapting a

[43] Ion Rebedeu and Cătălin Zamfir, "Calitatea vieţii şi modul de viaţă. Schiţă a unei prognoze a evoluţiei lor în următoarele decenii" [Quality of life and way of life: Sketch of a prognosis of their evolution in the next decades], in Ion Rebedeu and Cătălin Zamfir, eds., *Modul de viaţă şi calitatea vieţii* [Way of life and quality of life] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1982), 13–39.

methodology developed at the Institute of Social Research at the University of Michigan. Unlike the research into the socialist way of life, this model focused not on the external logic of social processes (how people organize their lives within the structural determinants of their society, class, or social group), but instead sought to uncover the "internal" logic of individual and group choices. What resulted was a mapping of subjective quality of life as a field of intervention along four main categories of indicators: life satisfaction, perceived quality of life, perception of change, and alienation/psychological integration. The largest group of indicators, the perceived quality of life, counted seventy-three components across several categories, such as one's own person (health, ability to enjoy life); family (relationship with the spouse, the distribution of household activities); living environment (house, neighbors, quality of possessions); work (profession, boss, prospects of being promoted); free time; possibilities for self-development; economic resources; social environment; social services; participation, etc. The model was tested empirically in spring 1980, by applying a 230-question survey to 1,804 subjects from urban settings throughout Romania. Yet it was not the results of the study, which were often unspectacular, but the instrument itself that represented the main premise of the research project.

Developing a methodology for surveying the subjective quality of life, argued the authors, had important implications for the understanding of social equality, as one of the core goals of socialist society. To begin with, they distinguished between objective equality (the objective conditions of life) and subjective equality (people's needs and aspirations). Whereas the normative goal of the future communist society was one of "absolute equality" (in objective and subjective terms), the reality of the persistence of subjective inequalities, which had both historical and structural sources (class inequalities compounded by cultural inequalities) led the authors to formulate the

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concept of "relative equality." Relative equality represented "the constant ratio between the objective conditions of life of different individuals or social groups and their subjective needs and aspirations."[44] From this perspective, ensuring equal objective conditions despite the persistence of unequal needs in effect engendered further inequality. Absolute equality, they contended, was a long-term goal, yet pursuing only relative equality on the short term also ran the risk of reproducing existing historical and structural inequalities. Instead, they defined the desirable development strategy as the pursuit of relative equality and moderate differentiation based on labor performance (quantity, quality, and social importance)—that is, "moderate inequality regarding the relative quality of life."[45] To this end, the empirical model of quality of life was designed to evaluate the extent to which the party's normative strategy was realized in practice, and to isolate the "abnormal" differences and the "pathological factors" generating them. With this, welfare was defined both in terms of objective conditions, and in terms of "subjective perception," with the latter now also the target of social engineering.

In the second half of the 1980s, as sociological empirical research was largely discontinued, Zamfir turned to theoretical work. He approached lifestyles not so much in terms of "subjective inequalities" but as alternatives to mainstream socialist society.[46] Their value, Zamfir implied by comparison to the alternative lifestyles emerging under capitalism, rested with the very refusal of the normative socialist "way

[44] Ion-Andrei Popescu, Ştefan Ştefănescu, Alin Teodorescu, Lazăr Vlăsceanu, Elena Zamfir, and Cătălin Zamfir, *Indicatori şi surse de variaţie a calităţii vieţii* [Quality of life indicators and sources of variation] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1984), 54
[45] Ibid., 57
[46] Cătălin Zamfir, "Stil de viaţă şi mod de viaţă. Reflecţii asupra stadiului actual al analizei sociologice" [Lifestyle and way of life: Reflections on the state of the art in sociological analysis], in Ion Rebedeu and Cătălin Zamfir, eds., *Stiluri de viaţă. Dinamica lor în societatea contemporană* [Lifestyles: Their dynamic in contemporary society] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1989), 33–54

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

of life," an argument which was seamlessly built into civil society discourses after 1989, while the issue of social inequality was pushed further into the background.

Reflecting on his career as a sociologist under state socialism, and on the popularity of quality of life, way of life, and lifestyle research in the 1980s, Zamfir argued, from a post-socialist vantage point, that the research program "offered the possibility to exercise political and social pressure to give more attention to people and their needs."[47] He maintained that social reform topics integrated by the regime from "the West" temporary offered opportunities for "technocratic," modernizing initiatives, yet were inevitably hollowed out of their original intentions. Nevertheless, they produced a "perverse effect" for the system, in that they "gave substance to the crystallization of an alternative culture to Ceauşescu's ideology," and also allowed sociologists to develop skills that they would be able to apply after the regime change.[48] While it is true that much of the "Western" sociological expertise was repurposed in the post-socialist period, and indeed Zamfir was the one to establish an Institute for Quality of Life Research already in 1990, this was not independent of the interventionist ethos that sociologists had fostered, while playing by the rules of ideological discourse as they shifted over the 1970s and 1980s.

Quality of life research speculated the ideological "qualitative turn" at the end of the 1970s to push a human-centered research agenda that would recover the value of subjectivity, yet in effect did so by elaborating a technology for governing it as a newly configured realm of intervention. The "scientification" of individualizing discourses such as that on lifestyles in the 1980s, which developed as a counterpart to the re-

[47] Cătălin Zamfir, *O istorie subiectivă în sociologia românească din 1944 până în prezent* [A subjective history in Romanian sociology, from 1944 to the present] (Iaşi: Polirom, 2009), 122.
[48] Ibid., 126.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

ideologization, in a strongly nationalist key, of the socialist collectivist ethos, spelled the ultimate failure of the humanist Marxist strain of literature on collective agency, and of the transnational attempt to formulate a "socialist sociology" to address the challenges of the postindustrial society. This allowed for quality of life research to be institutionalized immediately after 1989 as a "scientific instrument" of transition, despite the calls from Zamfir and other colleagues to take up quality of life as a political goal rather than simply consider it the result of socio-political development.[49] Through the rise and fall of technocratic aspirations in post-socialist governance, it is on offer, to date, as a "toolkit" for social policy making.[50]

6. *"Creativity under conditions of poverty"*

"Quality of life" research developed within the institutional context of Marxist-Leninist sociology, which created and integrated its own critics. Discussing the case of Dumitru Sandu, who graduated with the second cohort of sociology students at the University of Bucharest, in the last section of this chapter I explore how the new sociologists' marginality within the Marxist-Leninist establishment determined their take on the topic of welfare and its weight in the theoretical and methodological concerns of the 1980s. I reconstruct the trajectory of Dumitru Sandu based on an oral history interview and follow up conversation I conducted in June 2018. The interview was loosely structured around general issues of social epistemology in the 1960s–1980s period, or as formulated by Sandu himself, the question of "how sociology was possible in one of the most enclosed authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe."

[49] Cătălin Zamfir, "Calitatea vieţii ca obiectiv politic" [Quality of life as a political objective], *Calitatea vieții* 1 (1990): 5–20.
[50] My interpretation of the quality of life project is also informed by a discussion with Cătălin Zamfir, who has kindly agreed to meet me at the Institute for Quality of Life Research, where he serves as director, in May 2016.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

The follow-up conversation focused on the making of his first book, *Fluxurile de migraţie în România* (*Migration flows in Romania*), published in 1984. It was in *Fluxurile de migraţie* that Sandu introduced the concept of "quality of life," although as I argue in reconstructing its origins, it should be understood as the result of intellectual reworking over a period of more than a decade. I take Sandu's reflection on the book, his career, and sociology under state socialism more generally to be constitutive of the work itself. His account is certainly the result of hindsight and it is formulated from a clearly anti-communist standpoint, but perhaps more importantly it is also the result of a thoughtful and self-reflective approach to his past and at different points his interpretation of the past, as well.[51] In what follows it is therefore not my intention to counterpose this account to "my own interpretation," but to continue the dialogue by deconstructing and rearranging his own.

Sandu joined the sociology department at the University of Bucharest in 1967 and during his studies participated at the summer fieldwork teams coordinated by Henri H. Stahl, whom he considered his mentor. In 1972–79, he also pursued his PhD under Stahl's supervision, writing a dissertation on "The analysis of social differentiation in rural communities," discussed in more detail below. After graduating in 1971, Sandu received a job allocation at the Center for Sociological Research of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences, where he participated at a research project coordinated by Ioan Matei on the systematization of the basin of River Mureş. On the basis of empirical research he conducted in several villages, he published on the issue of participation at local development activities, as well as the role of the sociologist in

[51] It is also worth noting that Dumitru Sandu is one of the very few sociologists who has made all his publications available online, and has generously shared documents from his personal archive with me. He has also initiated a digitalization project of the main works of the members of the Bucharest School of Sociology, hosted by the website of the Faculty of Sociology at the University of Bucharest.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

studying, guiding, and mobilizing local participation, understood as an activity of "social engineering" or "community work."[52]

Fired from the Center for Sociological Research in 1975 because of his "personal file"—he was not a party member and his father had been a priest—Sandu worked as a researcher at the Institute of Agricultural Economics until 1977. Here, too, he recalled feeling out of place because of his background, and he eventually transferred to the Laboratory of Urban Sociology (later the Sociology Laboratory of the Design Institute for Typified Buildings), where he was employed as a researcher until 1992. Sandu described the laboratory as "an oasis of professionalism," where he had the opportunity to learn statistical techniques and even developed the first computer program for statistical analysis.

In 1992, Sandu became professor of sociology at the University of Bucharest, a position he had no access to before 1989 because of his personal file. Overall, Sandu thematized his career, in spite of the professional discontinuities, in terms of "luck under adverse condition," setting the tone for an account of the ways in which the epistemic and institutional limitations of sociological research under state socialism could be creatively mitigated, and to what result.

Over the course of the interview, Sandu systematically mapped the sources available to the generation of sociologists trained under state socialism, from professors (in his case, Stahl) to contacts with "foreign" literature (both Western literature and literature from the interwar period, but also contacts with visiting sociologists, especially from France) to one's personal frustration with the possibilities of sociology in Romania at the time

[52] See Dumitru Sandu, "Participarea locală" [Local participation] and "Stimularea participării locale" [Stimulating local participation], in Mioara Matei and Ioan Matei, eds., *Sociologie şi sistematizare în procesele de dezvoltare* [Sociology and systematization in development processes] (Bucharest: Editura tehnică, 1977), 138–50, 167–68.

("Communism was a superb school for creativity under conditions of poverty," he argued tongue in cheek). Having made the point that sociologists trained in the 1970s had not been formed "by communism alone," he nevertheless explained his own trajectory and that of sociology more generally as "a fight for intellectual survival," against party ideology and the forms in which it was imposed on sociologists, be it through censorship, the planning of scientific research, or institutional practices.

Sandu discussed at length two types of "strategies of survival." At the level of methodology, he argued that the use of statistical methods and technical language was an efficient way to avoid censorship: "Censorship was everywhere, but it didn't know about regression," he commented, later adding that "if you didn't know well a standardized method, you were much easier prey to any kind of ideological approach." When he was able to travel to the United States in 1986 on an IREX scholarship, shortly after he had joined the Communist Party, which he came to understand as a precondition for travelling abroad, it was statistical methods that he chose to specialize in at UCLA and George Washington University.

At the level of theory, he cultivated his interest in theorization at the example of Stahl, on the one hand by choosing thematic areas that were further from ideological control and on the other hand by focusing on operationalization. "We were formed with the idea that concepts need to be operationalized because otherwise you do ideology," Sandu explained in reply to my question regarding the idiosyncratic conceptual choices—group structure instead of social structure, differentiation rather than homogenization—in his PhD dissertation. By ideology he identified the mainstream literature on social structure and social homogenization, themes which he perceived as stemming directly from party documents. He had formed this opinion during his time at the Center for Sociological Research, where he explained the main research themes

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

were clearly set, and even Stahl, as president of the sociology section of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences, could at most attempt to make them "as humane and as scientific as possible."

In a similar vein, Sandu described his own dissertation as "a possible relevant example for the difficulties you had even if you were Stahl's doctoral student," detailing how upon reading a first draft of the dissertation the sociology department would not approve it before he added a chapter "of quotes" from Nicolae Ceauşescu and party documents—a solution he eventually received from Natalia Damian, for Stahl "did not care about the rituals, he had remained a free man." Sandu similarly described as ritual the voluntary reports on the dissertation he had to collect prior to the defense, along with the recommendation of the party secretary at the institute, references from former colleagues, and even the approval of the syndicate. Rereading these reports forty years later, he was surprised to see that even those written by "good specialists" were formulated in an ideologized language, and reasoned that everyone had in effect tried to help him, knowing of the difficulties he had in the past because of his background.[53]

Yet beyond the ritualistic use of quotes and ideological legitimation, Sandu's dissertation was, inevitably, formulated with reference to the analytical framework of social homogenization, even as an attempt "to get as close as possible to the differentiation I was interested in—I didn't say inequality because it would have been too much." He bypassed the issue of social structure by focusing on "group structures"

[53] Of the three official reviewers appointed by the Ministry of Education, Ion Iordăchel, Septimiu Chelcea, and Honorina Cazacu, the latter had in fact engaged most closely with Sandu's theoretical and methodological approach to social differentiation on its own terms, with almost no reference to homogenization. As noted in the summary of the defense, Iordăchel had even encouraged him to overcome his timidity in articulating the issues of social differentiation, and it was Chelcea, who discussed at length the methodological virtues of the dissertation, who also emphasized its ideological significance for the "theorization of homogenization/differentiation" as a counterpart. Reports from the personal archive of Dumitru Sandu.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

(inspired by Pitirim Sorokin, who he read in English and French), and their modernization at the level of rural communities, a process he defined as the combined result of homogenization in terms of vertical social hierarchies and horizontal differentiation as a consequence of the rationalization of social activities. Sandu identified three stages in the modernization of the group structure of rural communities after 1948, defined by the distribution of property but also by the relative weight of the processes of territorial migration (commuting or permanent change of residence) and social mobility in the evolution of group structures.

He projected that in a future stage based on the modernization of agriculture, social mobility will be realized to a much larger extent within communities than outside them. For the present stage, however, he hypothesized that migration played a central role in social differentiation, and he elaborated methods for the study of migration and for the measurement of social differentiation. These were meant to inform systematization, functioning as "an instrument for the diagnosis of social problems confronting a community in the process of development," and allowing for a "more efficient control of the process of migration from rural areas."[54] This was, in effect, a study of social engineering drawing on the research on systematization conducted at the Center for Sociological Research, which operated the conceptual shift (what Sandu called "conversion") from homogenization to differentiation within the theoretical framework of social structure research.

How had Sandu arrived at the topic of migration? In the process of operationalizing social differentiation, he decided that the research of social stratification and social

[54] Dumitru Sandu, "Analiza diferenţierii sociale în comunităţile rurale. Rezumatul tezei de doctorat" [The analysis of social differentiation in rural communities: Summary of the doctoral dissertation], University of Bucharest, Faculty of History-Philosophy, 1979, 5.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

mobility, as conducted by Honorina Cazacu, who he suggested had been instrumental in his removal from the Center for Sociological Research, was something he did not want to pursue. He also knew public opinion surveys to be beyond the acceptable "degree of freedom." As he articulated it in epistemic terms early on in the interview, although sociologists trained under state socialism had learned "how to work," because of the constraints of (self-) censorship their actual research was in practice "more Durkheim than Weber." Public opinion surveys were thought to be irrelevant, not least because of the subjects' self-censorship on sensitive topics. Consequently, Sandu explained with reference to the research he had conducted while at the Institute of Agricultural Economics, "Durkheim was used more because of the Gusti school and because of the restricted access to data. Data was collected at the level of the community with the knowledge that subjectivity matters, intentionality matters. But when we had to write it down on paper, in a research report… no way."

It was nevertheless through the experience of fieldwork that Sandu arrived at migration as a topic of research, a process he described in terms of "de-ideologization": "Only now I realized that the book [*Fluxurile de migraţie*] is a dialogue in more ways than one. In the sense that I went through a process—I was never ideologized, but ideology entered through your skin, though the lack of information, through everything. Any contact with the field meant an awakening." The research Sandu coordinated at the Institute for Agricultural Economics in two communes offered a bleak picture of the local infrastructural, economic, and administrative conditions increasingly leading the rural population to move from the villages.[55] Another consideration for the choice of the topic was that statistical data on migration had been made available for the first time

[55] Institutul de economie agrară, "Studiu asupra migraţiei forţei de muncă din agricultură" [Study on the migration of the labor force from agriculture], *Caiet de studii* 5, no. 64 (1977).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

in 1974, in the second (and last) Demographic Yearbook published by the Central Statistical Office under state socialism, which had most probably been occasioned by the World Population Conference, held in Bucharest the same year. It was also in the wake of the conference that the Centre démografique ONU-Roumanie (CEDOR) was established, to become a hub for specialization in the field of demography with access to foreign literature and invited professors from abroad.

If research was the result of a dialogue between theory, data, methods, and intuition, as Sandu formulated it, then it was at CEDOR, where he completed a specialization course in 1981, that he reworked his dissertation into a theoretical and methodological study of migration:

> And then I shifted from the idea of differentiation to the idea of migration. And I said: If the person leaves, that means he is dissatisfied, etc. etc., I had the theory. Simply I converted the idea of social differentiation into the idea of consequences of social differentiation and inequality. And that's how I arrived at migration, so that a big part from my PhD dissertation is the first draft of the analysis about migration.

Sandu drew in particular on neoclassical theories of migration, which explained the change of residence through economic advantages and the rationality of the migrant. He formulated a conceptual model of the determining factors of migration organized on five levels, from political decisions, to investments and economic organization, to the structure and distribution of the labor force and finally what he identified as the two intermediary variables explaining migration: the quality of life and the degree of communication between people from different communities.

In this model, quality of life aggregated objective conditions such as available workplaces, housing, and infrastructure and services.[56] Sandu defined quality of life as

[56] Dumitru Sandu, "Mémoir de fin de stage," CEDOR, 1981. Personal archive of Dumitru Sandu.

"the degree to which the values (imbodied in goods, services, or social relations) available to the members of a social group adequately satisfy their needs."[57] Noting that in this definition quality of life had an "objective component" in terms of the "objects" evaluated by the members of a social group and a "subjective component" represented by their needs and the criteria based on which they evaluated if their needs were met, Sandu focused his analysis in *Fluxurile de migraţie* on the former. Sandu also distinguished between the concept of quality of life and that of the motivation of migration, arguing that the quality of life was in effect inferred or constructed by the researcher based on the knowledge of the relation between the intensity of migration and the possible reasons for migration.

Even if people's motivation for moving could be studied through public opinion surveys, Sandu maintained, the model constructed by researchers would still be preferable given the fact that socio-economic factors could act without the mediation of conscious motivation and that researchers had better access to them through scientific methods. "Quality if life," he concluded, "allows [the researcher] to work with a 'constructed' motivation, broader than the 'real' motivation which he could capture through an opinion survey."[58] Here Sandu was referring to what he previously identified as the "institutional motivation of migration"—that is, the motivation officially recorded for the change of residence, which reflected not so much the migrant's real motivation, but the range of institutionally accepted motivations and prescribed by law. From this perspective, the concept of "quality of life" represented a corrective to the limited knowledge of both the subjects and the state administration.

[57] Dumitru Sandu, *Fluxurile de migraţie în România* [Migration flows in Romania] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1984), 32.
[58] Ibid., 33.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

Reflecting on *Fluxurile de migrație*, Sandu conceded that there was "very little agency" in it, which he explained as a consequence of the theoretical framework of neoclassical studies on migration, which privileged economic rationality. He saw the book's main achievements at the level of conceptual intervention, especially the very use of the term "migration." "There were topics which were clearly—to put it academically—dissonant with the official ideology," he explained. "Inequalities, disparities, migration. People never left from one place to another because they were satisfied."

It was in this recovery of the dimension of welfare against what he perceived as ideology, on the one hand, and the limitations of subjective experience on the other, that Sandu's approach, I argue, differed from the Marxist-Leninist strand of research on "way of life" as well as from its critical other, the "quality of life" research. However, in the process of establishing sociology as a non-ideological science and by circumscribing the issue of welfare to "objective" analysis, the problematic distinction underlining the move from "way of life" to "quality of life" was left unquestioned. The other of a strand of research deemed ideologically subservient and economically deterministic need not have been a technocratic approach to subjectivity. Yet no critical analysis of socio-economic development, inequality, and the social costs of austerity could have resulted from a "non-ideological" scientific approach to the issue of welfare, either.

3. *Conclusions*

At the end of the 1980s, going back to the data on quality of life in urban areas collected in 1980, Alin Teodorescu, who had been part of the original project, proposed a secondary analysis of the dimensions of alienation and perception of change. In the original interpretation, the two had been recorded and analyzed as intermediary

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

variables to explain the variation in people's subjective experience of the quality of life, yet Teodorescu believed they were worth studying in themselves. Teodorescu's analysis of the data on alienation/integration showed that, on average, people tended to care about their own interest rather than that of the community; preferred not to intervene when there was an injustice; thought that with some effort one could understand the surrounding world; felt that generally speaking things were evolving in the right direction, that on a personal level if people set their mind on doing something they will succeed, and on a societal level that people can contribute to change in a meaningful way.

The most pronounced differences, his analysis showed, were determined not by the respondents' sex or age, but by their profession. The perception of workers, intellectuals, and clerks varied significantly, with intellectuals notably reporting a lower quality of life compared to workers, and clerks expressing the highest degree of satisfaction with the utility of their work, highest degree of mobilization, as well as a more pronounced sense that the world is individualistic compared to workers. When it came to people's perception of change, however, which the survey measured by asking subjects to evaluate how things were ten years before compared to the present, and to project how things will evolve ten years in the future, responses were homogeneous across all professional categories in terms of the overall trends. People perceived pollution and the threat of war as increasing; also increasing—democracy, rationality, and happiness; while stratification and monotony were diminishing. Clerks had the most optimistic outlook and intellectuals the most pessimistic, but half of all respondents perceived past and future change as continuous.

Teodorescu concluded by suggesting that any future research would have to focus on the configuration of lifestyles, by way of an anthropological approach integrating the

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

subjectivity of the researcher. "The problem of contemporary Romanian sociology is not just seeing how people respond to standardized questionnaires, but what are the essential structures of contemporary social life."[59] Decades into the study of society, it seemed, sociologists had not yet even started.

The shift from quality of life to the interest in social integration and societal perceptions of change, and methodologically from surveys to participant observation was symptomatic for the projected breakdown of the "social engineering" approach to welfare characteristic of the previous two decades just as the social was revealed to show no signs of the altogether breakdown of the socialist system. From futurology to sociology to demography, welfare was constructed since the second half of the 1960s as an object of study, planning, and forecasting, with little interest in the logic of how welfare was achieved across different lifestyles. By the time criticism of this approach was formulated at the end of the 1980s, the tools for the re-articulation of welfare as subject to management were there to be "operationalized."

[59] Alin Teodorescu, "Caracteristici ale percepţiei calităţii vieţii. O analiză secundară" [Characteristics of the perception of quality of life: A secondary analysis], in Ion Rebedeu and Cătălin Zamfir, eds., *Stiluri de viață*, 191.

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Conclusions

In the wake of the second oil crisis in 1979, the 1980s were a time of austerity everywhere in the Eastern bloc. Romania, however, infamously underwent a decline in standards of living more drastic than anywhere else, from the availability of basic consumer products, to the rationing and food, to the severely disrupted provision of electricity and heating. As a consequence of the continuing investment in its oil refinement industry, it had incurred most foreign debt in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and since 1982 worked towards repaying it in full—even against the recommendations of the creditors themselves—a goal it achieved, at dramatic social costs, in spring 1989. By the end of the year, however, mass protests toppled the Ceauşescu regime. The existing historiography illustrates three strands of thinking on the relationship between social circumstances and political change, which I identify as the economic; the everyday resistance; and the civil/uncivil society explanations of late 1980s Socialist Romania.

The economic explanation offers an analysis of the role of austerity, as part of a package of economic ideas about development, in the 1989 regime change. It shows how the commitment to industrialization and policy sovereignty drove the Ceauşescu regime to repay its nine-billion-dollar foreign debt in spite of the social costs of austerity, which eventually led to popular mobilization. With its focus on the role economic reasoning—and indeed its agenda of reconstructing the rationality of the regime's economic choices in the context of the 1980s—this approach decenters the explanations that merely identify Ceauşescu as the culprit or mastermind, reproducing his Cold War image as an exceptionally independent leader in the Eastern bloc, an image sustained both by the regime itself and by commentators in Western Europe and North America. Instead, it

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

accounts for Romania's integration into the global economy,[1] seen in a long-term perspective.[2] This strand is not explicit about the way in which economic policy leads to popular mobilization, yet implicitly rests on the assumption that a continued sense of relative deprivation (compared to the 1960s and 1970s, a period of consumerism and perceived liberalization), fuels everyday resistance and eventually—although it is not necessarily easy to predict when—leads to popular uprising.

This connects to the second cluster of analyses of the 1980s, which focus specifically on the study of everyday life and the experiences of "ordinary" people. We learn from this reach literature how people lived and how they got by as much as we do about what they remember and how. And while usually there is no generalization about the relationship between individual experience and societal change, this approach fleshes out individual strategies of survival as simultaneously strategies of resistance, which have the potential to both reproduce and subvert the system "from within." In other words, from this perspective everyday life does not just reflect the existing economic and political arrangements, but at the same time constitutes them in ways which render them vulnerable to change, such as in the case of the "second economy." While the puzzle of the economic-type explanations is how to connect macroeconomic processes to mezo- and microsocial change, the puzzle of approaches to everyday life is usually the opposite. To this one should add the complications, which have spun whole new fields of research, of the very tools and sources used in the process—oral history, memories, diaries, autobiographies, artefacts, etc.[3]

[1] Ban, "Sovereign Debt."

[2] Bogdan Murgescu, "Explicaţii ale eşecului economic" [Explanations for the economic failure], in *România şi Europa: Acumularea decalajelor economice, 1500–2010* [Romania and Europe: The accumulation of economic disparities] (Iaşi: Polirom, 2010), 392–406.

[3] A good overview of the research into everyday life in state socialist Romania are the chapters by Cristina Petrescu and Dragoş Petrescu, Smaranda Vultur, and Simina Bădică in Maria Todorova, Augusta Dimou,

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

The third and final strand of explanations focus on the role of different societal groups in the regime change or, alternatively, the regime "implosion." These analyses narrow down on the agents of change, which they variously identify as 1. the civil society, mobilized in the name of freedom, democracy, human rights, etc. 2. part of the communist party nomenklatura that took over power in a coup-like move, "stealing the revolution," or 3. the uncivil society, or the communist establishment broadly defined; which in the context of economic bankruptcy and geopolitical reshuffling simply abandoned the existing form of economic and political organization.[4] These analyses bypass the issue of how to connect societal, economic, and political change altogether, and rather focus on particular social groups, holders or managers of economic, political, or cultural capital. What they lose in terms of scope by foregoing representativity they make up for in terms of the complexity of the causal explanation.

The account of "the social" in state socialist Romania which I proposed in this dissertation speaks to each of these three explanations. It argues for the need to reconstruct the logic of not just economic rationality, but also social thought on its own terms. As with social scientists' engagement in debates about development, it suggests that the two were complexly intertwined, a point labored by social scientists themselves ever since the second half of the 1960s. Mapping these reflections reminds us that there is a complicated prehistory to thinking about the relationship between macroeconomic processes and social change. Moreover, it shows that there is a certain cyclicity to the preeminence given to one or the other, the attempts at focusing specifically on the relationship between them, and the moments when this relationship is considered

and Stefan Troebst, *Remembering Communism: Private and Public Recollections of Lived Experience in Southeast Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014).

[4] An overview of these explanations in Stephen Kotkin and Jan Gross, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment* (New York: Random House, 2009).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

obvious and left largely unexplained. To analyses of everyday life under state socialism, it adds the crucial perspective of contemporary observations on the social, by which I mean not just quantitative and qualitative data, but the theoretical and methodological thinking around them. Empirical research conducted under state socialism is often deemed unreliable, with a score of limitations usually involved: the tempering with statistics, the lack of information on certain taboo topics, people's supposed reluctance to "tell the truth" in questionnaires in order to protect themselves or alternatively their fluency in saying what is expected of them rather than what they actually believe, etc. Yet what this dissertation shows is that if taken seriously, social scientists are generally very explicit about the limitations of their research, themselves: they take note of the (un)representativity of the samples they use, of the difficulties encountered when collecting data, the challenges of processing and interpreting it, or the biases of the methodological tools available. What is often more difficult to reconstruct is the intention behind idiosyncratic methodological and theoretical choices—but where that is possible empirical research offers a wealth of information not just about the experiences and expectations of "the people" but also about the social scientists themselves, who, to paraphrase Martha Lampland's reassurance about Hungarian economists and bureaucrats, are people, too. Their often ingenious solutions to the epistemic limitations they perceived are examples of the "sociological imagination" of the 1960s–1980s. Their work reads as an interesting blend of ideas which could still be integrated to the social thought of the post-socialist period, paradigms irremediably abandoned, and forgotten insights which might still be worth recovering.

As to the role of social scientists as a "social group" with regard to the regime change, they are often judged their work in terms of not having predicted the end of state socialism. Yet the study of past ideas about the social, and of the instruments grounding

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them, brings into perspective the shifting horizon of possibility at different times, for social scientists of different backgrounds, and as their object of study changed, as well. In other words, it illustrates that what can be conceivably thought or known about society and the way it functions changes with the society itself. Within this context, futurology itself has its own history as a technology of governance and resource for critical thought. Moreover, the evaluation of social sciences under state socialism merely on the point of their supposed inability to predict change underestimates epistemic changes at play long before 1989, most notably the disillusionment with the reformist ideas and interventionist ethos of the 1960s and 1970s, and especially the epistemic shift marked by the 1980s.

This insight has led to analyses of the development of the social sciences in the Eastern bloc, and economics in particular, in terms of the coproduction of neoliberal ideas across the East–West divide long before their supposed imposition in the region from outside.[5] This literature has recovered the historical dimension of knowledge production as a much-needed corrective to the transitological strand of research emerging in the postsocialist period. Yet this approach, similarly to the observation that social scientists had not been able to predict the breakdown of the socialist system, has been unable to integrate the experience and self-reflection of the social scientists themselves.

My approach to the three elements which I identified as central to the social imaginary of the immediate post-socialist period, participation, equality, and welfare, has attempted to avoid this pitfall by reconstructing the social thought of the 1960s–80s as a "reverse genealogy." This has allowed me to map strands of research and theorization

5 Johanna Bockman, *Markets in the Name of Socialism: The Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

of the social that would not be immediately recognizable in the post-socialist period. The case of Pavel Câmpeanu is illustrative in this sense. When in 1989 the last part in his trilogy on the Marxist critique of Stalinism was published, he envisaged that the abolishing of Stalinism "could end in a return to capitalism, or to the constitution of an effectively industrial anti-capitalism bent simultaneously on its own maturity and deradicalization."[6] His involvement in the civil society project of the Social Dialogue Group in the immediate post-socialist period, however, broke almost entirely with the Marxist theoretical framework in which he had defined the social over the previous two decades, and he often published as a critical media and public opinion specialist. The reverse genealogy of postsocialist thought starting from the Marxist revisionism of the second half of the 1960s makes visible the various strands it produced, and how actors could navigate between them in ways obscured by the analysis of ideas in their postsocialist context alone.

In the case of Marxist-Leninist sociology the results are even more spectacular, as this has been the approach to the social most thoroughly effaced in the post-socialist period. The history of intellectual thought on women's emancipation under state socialism has been all but forgotten after 1989, or otherwise subsumed to the vague concept of propaganda. The remarkable intellectual articulation and institutionalization of liberal feminist thought and gender studies in the postsocialist period, which could rely on preciously little in terms of a local tradition, also meant that a range of approaches to the economic and social condition of women developed under state socialism were not just discontinued, but also forgotten. This does not meant to imply that they should have been continued or that they should be recovered, but to show that the fluency in the

[6] Pavel Câmpeanu, *Exit: Towards Post-Socialism* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 1989), xiii.

DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2019.03

various languages of intellectual thought on women's emancipation in the 1970s has been lost to the point that they have become almost unrecognizable as intellectual thought.

Finally, there are the cases in which not just ideas about the social, but the entire technology underpinning them was successfully institutionalized in the postsocialist period, such as quality of life research. Cătălin Zamfir established in 1990 a research institute starting from a research agenda he had developed a decade previously, and using a methodology he had imported and adapted from the United States in the second half of the 1970s. But was this a case of the coproduction of neoliberal social intervention strategies which facilitated its adoption as part of the transition package?

In the immediate postsocialist period, Cătălin Zamfir established himself as one of the most critical commentators on the social responsibility of sociologists, on the one hand, and the social aspects of transition on the other. Writing in 1992 about the sociologists' dissatisfaction with their contribution to the transformation of the Romanian society after 1989, he formulated an analysis of their "diffuse feeling that the revolution had been stolen" as the combined result of:

1. the general disillusionment with the potential of a coherent and consensual collective social activism in which sociologists were to play an essential role;
2. the illusion characteristic of all revolutionary situations that social and historical realities are transparent, and the consequent privileging of future-oriented projects instead of investing in the critical analysis of existing social realities (i.e., the realities of transition); and
3. the predominance of political-economic and juridical interests (the transition to the market economy and establishment of a multiparty system) in carrying out the transition, as opposed to social concerns.[7]

Having served as Minister for Labor and Social Protection in 1990–91, Zamfir further decried the marginalization of Romanian experts in the process of transition and the

[7] Cătălin Zamfir, "Reflecții asupra complexului sociologiei române postrevoluționare" [Reflections on the complex of Romanian post-revolutionary sociology], *Sociologia Românească* 3, no.1 (1992): 5–9.

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almost exclusive reliance on blueprints imported by international institutions such as the World Bank, alongside their own expert advisors.[8] In addition, he identified the weaknesses of the community of sociologists itself, mainly in terms of the low number and insufficient training of existing sociologists, but also in terms of the poor translatability of the sociological discourse outside of the discipline, for a wider audience of specialists and policy-makers.[9] By reconstructing the context and the inherent ambiguity of his approach to welfare in the 1980s, one need not interpret the case of the institutionalization of quality of life research in the postsocialist period in terms of "false consciousness." Situated in the intellectual and institutional context in which it was originally developed, the continuity with the period of transition appears in terms of the modality of political intervention itself.

Three interrelated claims underpin Zamfir's diagnosis of the sociologists' perceived failure as experts in the early postsocialist period, which I believe speak to the self-understanding of the sociological community more broadly: their overall professional ethos, centered around ideas of democratic participation at the restructuring of society, was drowned out by economic concerns; their policy-making expertise was incompatible with and overruled by that of foreign experts; the sociological community privileged democratic, participative reform to technocratic reform. I do not question Zamfir and other sociologists' motivations in the early debates about Romania's transition from socialism, nor do I engage with the pervasive interpretation of the "stolen/betrayed revolution." What I proposed in this dissertation, instead, was a method to historicize these claims by going back to the formative debates over the makeup of sociology under socialism; drawing attention to the role of the transnational

8 Cătălin Zamfir, "Starea actuală a sociologiei şi perspectivele ei (I)" [The current state of sociology and its prospects], *Forum* 9–10 (1993): 41–51.
9 Cătălin Zamfir, "Starea actuală a sociologiei şi perspectivele ei (II)," *Forum* 11–12 (1993): 10–18.

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circulation of sociological knowledge during the Cold War; and reconstructing how democratic and technocratic assumptions about the role of sociology intertwined in the articulation of the main social issues of participation, equality, and welfare. I argue that this would make possible an analysis of sociologists' involvement in the early transition period focused not on their failure to act but on the kind of agency which they mobilized. Moreover, it would allow an analysis of social thought in the postsocialist period which goes beyond thinking in terms of continuity and rupture to account for the multiple genealogies of "the social" from the 1960s to the present.

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